

この素晴らしい 世界に3 祝福を!

よんで
ますよ
ダクネス
さん。

暁

なつめ

三嶋くろね

illustration





よんで
ますよ
ダクネス
さん。

この素晴らしい
世界に3
祝福を!





この全身ねつちよりは、カエルの分泌物です。
このまま寝技に持ち込んであげます！

めいめぐみん？
笑えない冗談は止めてね？
こつち来ないで！

お任せください
旦那様。

臭っ！これは間違いないわ、
悪魔から漂う匂いよ！

……ご、困りましたね。
このままでは……。

この素晴らしい世界に祝福を!3



ようすよ、
ますすよ、
ダクネス
さん。



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Profile



AQUA

年
齡
不
詳
ARCH PRIEST

LEAVE EVERYTHING TO THIS GODDESS,
THE DEFENCE COUNSEL OF THE
HIKKINEET KAZUMA!

NAH, I'M BEGGING YOU,
DON'T STIR ANY MORE
TROUBLE...



MEGU-
MIN

13歲
ARCH WIZARD

HMMP! YOU CAN COUNT ON ME! THE
INTELLIGENCE STATS OF THE CRIM-
SON MAGIC RACE ARE VERY HIGH!

I'M REALLY BEGGING
ALL OF YOU, STOP
MESSING AROUND!



DARK-
NESS

18歲
CRUSADER

NO MATTER WHAT EVIDENCE
THEY MAY PRESENT, I WILL
FEND THEM OFF WITH MY IRON
WILL AND IMPENETRABLE
DEFENCE!

JUST GO
AWAY!



KA-
ZUMA

16歲
ADVENTURER



YUN-
YUN

13歲
ARCH WIZARD



ERIS

年
齡
不
詳
GODDESS



WIZ

20歲
SHOP
OWNER

Characters

Character

SENA

THE PROSECUTION

CHRIS

I AM KINGDOM PROSECUTOR SENNA. ADVENTURER CHRIS, COULD I TROUBLE YOU TO ATTEND COURT AS A WITNESS?

HMMM~~~... NO PROBLEM!

..... COULD YOU ATTEND COURT AS A WITNESS TOO?

HEY, WHY THE SUDDEN PAUSE?

.....IT'S NOTHING.

OHhhh! IF YOU REALLY WANT TO INVITE ME, I GUESS I COULD MAKE TIME.

IS THAT SO. SO A SMALL TIME DELINQUENT LIKE YOU IS ACTUALLY BUSY. WHAT A SURPRISE.

..... I GET IT, I WILL GO TO COURT OKAY!?

AGE 20歳

JOB KINGDOM PROSECUTOR

AGE 15歳?

JOB THIEF

DUST

AGE 17歳

JOB WARRIOR

CHOMU SUKE

AGE ???

JOB ???

ALEXEI BARNES WALTHER

AGE 21歳

JOB NOBLE

DUSTINESS FORD IGNIS

AGE 45歳

JOB GRAND NOBLE

Other

Prologue

-- Dearest.

It should be getting cold in your world. Dear father, mother, are you doing well?

"Defendant, Satou Kazuma. In review of your repeated inhumane actions..."

Is the snow starting to melt in the world over there?

Is younger brother doing okay?

"And your actions that obviously disrupt the peace of the town..."

I think everyone is doing well as usual.

"The jury concludes that the argument of the prosecutor is adequate."

I am doing well in this world too--

"I find the accused guilty and hereby--"

So I beg forgiveness from both of you...

"--- sentence you to death."

This unfilial son who is now a criminal.

Chapter 1: Requesting aid against this unjust sentencing!

Part 1

There used to be something feared by people all over the world which had a bounty. It is unknown who came up with the name, which is...

Mobile Fortress Destroyer.

That infamous bounty target was taken down not long ago by us thanks to my brilliant command.

And right now, in order to collect the bounty reward for bringing down the destroyer, I came to the adventurers guild but--

“Adventurer Satou Kazuma! You’re under suspicion of committing subversion of the nation! Please come along with us!”

The situation took a weird turn.

“Eh... May I ask who are you? Or rather, what does subversion of the nation mean? I just came here to collect my payout.”

I timidly asked the woman with a serious expression before me.

The rowdy guild fell into dead silence because of what the woman who was accompanied by knights said.

“I am a prosecutor of the Kingdom, Sena. Subversion of the nation literally means committing an act that undermines the authority of the nation. We suspect that you are either a terrorist or a minion of the demon king army.”

The woman with long brunette hair calling herself Sena said as she glared at me with stern eyes.

She gave the impression of a secretary, like an intelligent beauty.

After hearing Sena said that, Aqua shouted.

“Eeeh!? Hey, Kazuma, what trouble did you stir up this time? What crimes did you commit while I wasn’t looking! Apologize right now! I will apologize together with you, so do it quick!”

“Are you an idiot! There is no way I will commit such crimes! And we spend most of our time together, you should know I didn’t do anything!”

As I was scolding Aqua, Megumin said:

“Wait a minute, did you get the wrong person? Kazuma does commit minor infractions like sexual harassment from time to time, but he doesn’t have the guts to carry out such a major crime.”

“Are you helping me or looking for a fight?”

As I retorted Megumin, Darkness followed up and said:

“Yeah, I don’t think this man will commit such a serious crime. If he had the guts, he would do more than oggle at me with creepy eyes when I walk around the house in a skimpy attire. He is a loser who doesn’t even dare to do a night raid.”

<TL: Night raid as in kinky stuff>

“Who who who is looking at you!? Aren’t you too self conscious!? Don’t get conceited just because you have a sexy body, I have the right to choose alright!?”

When she heard me said that, Darkness’ face turned red instantly.

“After asking me to do all that in the shower, you are saying this now...?!”

“I was manipulated by a succubus that time! And you are the one with the problem, being so docile and scrubbing my back because of the mood! And what do you want now? Are you expecting something? Just how gullible and open are you!”

"I I I know you still have memories about that...! And as a crusader serving the goddess Eris, my body is still pure! Saying I am easy to con and open? I will kill you!"

As Darkness said these dangerous words, she attempted to strangle me as we got into a scuffle. One of the knights beside Sena broke up the fight.

Sena who didn't even move a brow after witnessing the commotion said coldly:

"Teleporting the core of the destroyer, coronatite, was the instruction made by that man. And the place the ore was teleported too, was the mansion of the landlord."

After she said that, the entire guild fell into deathly silence.

-- Coronatite. During the fight with the destroyer, the one who asked someone to teleport that stone which was about to explode, is me.

To think that that stone--

"Really, so that landlord died in the explosion...!"

"He is not dead, don't kill him off! Coincidentally, the landlord sent away all the household staff and was in the basement himself, so there were no casualties. But the mansion was destroyed."

Hearing that there was no death, I breathed a sigh of relief.

"Well then, no one died in the fight against the destroyer, that's great."

"It's not great! Do you know the situation right now? You sent an explosive device into the mansion of the landlord and blew up the entire mansion. Like I told you, You're under suspicion of being either a

terrorist or a minion of the demon king army. Anyway, I will listen to what you have to say back at the station.”

Sena’s words turned the quiet guild rowdy again.

That was expected. All the adventurers present knew what kind of person I am.

At the same time, they knew how active I was during the fight against the destroyer.

“Ku, I thought it’s something terrible... Kazuma was the most valuable player during the battle against the destroyer. He might be the one who ordered the teleport of the Coronatite, but he had no choice in that situation. If not for Kazuma’s wits, people might have died when the Coronatite explodes. He should be commended, not prosecuted.”

Sounds of people affirming what Megumi said sounded out all around the guild.

You, you guys...!

While I was feeling touched, Sena said coldly:

“By the way, the charge of subversion could be brought on suspects other than the mastermind. Before the trial ends, I will advise everyone to mind your words and actions. If there are people who want to go to jail with him, I won’t mind.”

The guild turned silent once again after her speech.

After this--

“...’Don’t worry! The world is huge! Compared to a place with lots of people, the chance of it ending up somewhere with nobody around is higher! Don’t worry, I will take all the responsibility! I might look this

way, but my luck is incredibly good!'... I remember that was what Kazuma said during that moment..."

Aqua said suddenly.

... I did say that, but that girl is usually an idiot, why does she remember things so clearly at such a time? Could it be...

"Aqua, could it be... you are thinking of pushing all the blame... onto me...?"

Aqua didn't answer my question, and just averted her gaze awkwardly.

"By the way, I never made it into the inside of the destroyer. If I was there, I would definitely have stopped Kazuma from making that decision. Unfortunately, I wasn't there, so it couldn't be helped. That's right, how unfortunate."

No one asked her anything, but Megumin started a monologue out of nowhere.

"... Hey, hold it, Aqua, Megumin, you two, could it be..."

The two of them wanted to...!

At this moment, Darkness defended me, standing before Sena and said:

"Wait a minute, I am the mastermind, and the one giving the instructions is me. Please let me join in the kinky games in prison... No, I mean if you want to arrest Kazuma, take me in and interrogate me too!"

"I heard that you only stood in front of the destroyer and was totally useless right?"

"!?"

Sena put salt in Darkness' wound without hesitation, causing her to look at me with tears welling up. But Darkness being useless was a fact, so I ignored her since I don't have the time for that.

In this situation, Wiz who was quiet all this while raised her hand timidly.

"Erm, the one who casted teleportation was me, if you want to arrest Kazuma-san, then I..."

Aqua grabbed Wiz's raised hand at this point.

"Don't do it Wiz! If sacrificing one person is enough, that would be the best! I know you feel bad, but you need to endure this...! That's right, Kazuma is not leaving us forever. We need to wait patiently for Kazuma to return safely from prison, understand?"

That bitch! Don't make it sound like my jail term is confirmed!

No, the one who instructed Wiz was me, at the very least, I need to protect Wiz!

"Forget it, even if you are not with me, I can still rely on the guys in the guild!"

As I said that, I looked one round through the guild. But all the adventurers averted their eyes after meeting mine.

Ev, even you guys!

"Hey, what kind of joke is this! Put in more effort you guys! At least resist a little!"

As I lashed out at them, a girl mage said softly:

“The first time I met Kazuma-san... That’s right, I saw it that time. At the alley behind the guild, Kazuma-san stripped a female thief of her panties. Yes, his expression back then impacted me deeply.”

Wait...!

“That’s right, I always thought Kazuma will get into big trouble one day...”

“Yeah, me too. I heard a rumor that he locked the priest in his party inside a cage and used her as bait for crocodiles.”

“There’s more, I heard that when someone challenged him to a duel, Kazuma stole the challenger’s magic sword and sold it.”

“Oh, you guys are turning on me now?! I will remember your faces, loudmouths! Better watch your back after I prove my innocence...!”

As I was telling them off, two knights grabbed my arms forcefully.

“I won’t forget this--!”

Part 2

-- The police station in the middle of the town.

A building a just adventurer like me won’t frequent.

Right now, I am inside the police station, being led into its depths.

“Okay, go in obediently. Until after the trial is over, this will be your room.”

Sena who was walking in front of me said as she stopped before a small and dark cell.

“Hey, I am the hero who saved this town right? Are you for real? Are you really going to lock me inside a cell? Are you serious?”

I became afraid after seeing the cell. I asked Sena attempting to get into her good side, but...

“I will question you thoroughly tomorrow, just rest here for today.”

Sena didn't answer my question and ignored me. When the knights heard what she said, they pushed me into the cell.

After this, Sena turned around and left with the knights.



“Hey! Wait!... Hey! ... Hey... Really...”

Inside the dark and cold cell, I grabbed the iron bars with my hands, losing my composure with this sudden turn of events.

... Up until this morning, I was still lounging around my mansion.

Why did things turn out like this?

Not knowing what to do, I surveyed the cell. I found some rugs on the icy floor, a toilet at the corner and a window with iron bars, that's all.

How unfair. Treating the one who saved the town this way is too much.

I hugged my legs and sat down, burying my face between my knees.

I know the rules of this place doesn't make sense and the world is dangerous, but I never thought it would be to such an extent.

Thinking back now, my time as a hikikomori was so wonderful.

I could sleep until noon inside a warm room, then spend all day playing games after waking up.

Eating the meals prepared by my parents, sleeping whenever I wanted and getting up whenever I pleased, a self-indulgent life.

But after coming to this world, I had been living through hardship everyday.

I don't have any knowledge about this different world, can't find a good job and couldn't work well in the service industry. I had to perform hard labor after arriving in this world and sleep in the stables every night.

And I had to clean up after those idiots and got burdened with debts...!

The more I thought about it, the angrier I got. Just wait until I get out, all of you!

... But.

"I want to go back... I had enough, I want to go back to Japan..."

I remembered my original goal of returning to Japan.

This was a world with a feudal society and I was being charged in court.

The person I offended wasn't a nobody, if I make a wrong move, I might get the death sentence.

My current circumstances was dire, and being placed in a dark cell made me very uneasy. At this moment...

As I was about to cry inside my cell, I heard several sets of footsteps draw near from the distance.

"Hey, I won't resist so be more gentle!"

"Shut up, scum! faster!"

Alongside the sound of clanking armor, a nasty voice boomed out.

Seemed like another prisoner was going to a cell near me.

... No, wait. There is only one cell here.

Come on, I don't want to share a cell with an unknown criminal!

"Go in! Really, how many times do you want to come here? This is a prison, not your room. And there is someone who went in before you, don't fight now."

"Alright alright, I get it. Sorry for the intrusion... Hey, isn't this Kazuma! What are you doing here?"

--The one entering the cell was the infamous delinquent adventurer in town, Dust.

"Hey, what a coincidence to meet you here! So, what did you do?"

After the knights left, Dust who seemed happy for some reason asked me.

"Nothing much, they seemed to think I am a terrorist... During the battle with the destroyer, I gave the order to teleport away the core that was about to explode. In the end, that thing was sent to the landlord's mansion and blew his house apart."

Hearing me say that, Dust burst into laughter.

"Wahaha, that's great, Kazuma! That stinky landlord is detestable anyway! Well done! Wahaha, he had it coming!"

"Hey, hold it, it wasn't intentional! I didn't do it because I had something against the landlord! Or rather... I want to know. what are you doing here, Dust?"

From what the knight said, he seemed to be a regular here.

"Me? Nothing much. I heard the payout for defeating the destroyer is coming, so I ate and drank to my content and left tabs everywhere, thinking that I will clear the debts with the payout. I thought the payout would be great, so I took a loan to gamble. In the end, the payout was smaller than I thought and I couldn't pay back the money. With no money, I had to sleep in the stables, but its cold in this season. I would rather come here so I won't freeze to death and have food to eat. So I ate at some place without paying. And the debtors couldn't chase me here too."

This man really lived up to his name.

Seeing the sorry state of the unrepentant delinquent Dust made me feel better about being locked away here.

Part 3

After killing time chatting with Dust and eating dinner, I turned in for the night.

-- I didn't know how long I slept.

Hearing an explosion from far away, I felt a slight tremor shortly after and woke up suddenly. At the same time, I heard a soft voice.

"... Ka... Kazuma! Hey, Kazuma, wake up!"

The moonlight shone in through the iron bars covering the windows.

It was probably late in the night.

"Hey, Kazuma, can you hear me? Kazuma--"

The soft voice coming from outside the window sounds familiar.

I looked around me, confirming that no one was around aside from Dust who was snoring.

This cell was situated in the deepest part of the police station, they probably thought that there was no need for anyone to guard it.

The window that was installed with iron bars was at a place much taller than I am.

I walked towards the bottom of the window, and could hear Aqua's voice clearly this time.

"Aqua! What do you want, dammit!"

"I'm here to save you of course! Megumin and Darkness are creating a diversion right now to attract the attention of the guards. Megumin probably set off her explosion magic somewhere near town, drawing the police away. Darkness should be fleeing the scene with Megumin who depleted her mana in tow."

So the tremor I felt in my dreams was from the explosion magic.

"Anyway, why are you guys thinking of saving me now? If you wanted to help, you should have supported me during the day."

"If we did that, we will be spending our time in prison together! We didn't do this out of fear of what Kazuma will do to us after he gets out, definitely not."

Hearing the latter half of her sentence, I had a rough idea of why they came to rescue me.

But--

"But would it be fine to run away like this? Won't it make matters worse?"

"What nonsense are you saying, subversion of the nation is punishable by death. I heard from Darkness that the landlord is a despicable and petty person. For a nobody adventurer like Kazuma, he will use his influence to twist the facts and kill you off."

As expected of an alternate world with a middle age level civilization.

Lives were treated like trash.

“... I will break out of prison then, but how do I leave this place, cut the iron bars in the window?”

Aqua laughed confidently upon hearing me say that, and threw something through the gap between the iron bars to my side.

Dropping onto the ground with a slight metallic sound was a piece of steel wire.

What should I do with this. Was that girl telling me to...

“First, use that wire to open the lock of your cell, just like a manga. You can then use your ‘hide’ skills to escape the police station! After that, return to the mansion and prepare to run away in the night! That’s it then, I will wait for you at the front of the police station!”

Aqua left after saying these words.

I picked up the wire and looked at the lock of the prison cell.

... It’s an 8 digit number lock.

“... I will just continue to sleep.”

I covered myself with the blanket once again.

Part 4

“Get up! Come with me. Time for your interrogation!”

I was still wrapped in my blanket when Sena barged into the cell and woke me up.

“What is it, it’s still early...”

“It’s almost noon! How do you spend your time normally?!”

Under the watchful eyes of the guards, I was brought before a certain room.

“Alright, get in. I will listen to what you have to say, then decide if I am going to prosecute you. You better think carefully before you speak!”

After hearing Sena’s threatening words, I cautiously walked into the room. At the center was a table and two chairs.

There was a small table and chair near the exit.

This set up was just like the police interrogation room you see in movies.

One of the knights who escorted me over sat in the chair at the entrance silently and placed a piece of paper on the table.

This action is known as taking a statement right?

The other knight hurried me to the seat in the middle of the room.

He then stood quietly behind me, probably standing by to subdue me if I turn violent.

Two knights in full armor are in this small room. As I was feeling tense from the pressure, Sena sat down on the other side of the table and placed a small bell on the table.

“Do you know what this is? This is a magic item that can see through lies, used in court and places like this. This bell is synchronized with the magic cast in this room, and will ring when lies are uttered. Please remember this... Well then, I will begin my questioning now.”

After Sena said that, her face turned serious and the interrogation begun in this heavy atmosphere.

She tapped her index fingers on the table too, trying to exert pressure on me.

“Satou Kazuma. Age sixteen, working as an adventurer. Your job is also an adventurer... So, state your place of birth, and what you were doing before you started adventuring.”

A sudden high difficulty question.

Where did I come from, and what did I do, how should I explain that.

She said that bell will ring if I tell a lie--

“I am from Japan, and I was a student.”

-- Ring.

My words made that bell ring... Hey, I didn't lie okay.

Sena who was tapping the table stopped and frowned.

“... Write this down, falsifying place of birth and job history...”

The knight in charge of taking minutes started writing.

“Wait! I didn't lie!”

-- Ring. What is with that! Why is it ringing!

I am from Japan and was a student...! Was... a student....

“... I am from Japan. I spent everyday in my house, living a depraved life.”

After I answered once again and Sena stared at that bell.

I also stared at the bell closely.

-- It didn't ring this time.

"... Why are you so vain, lying about being a student?"

"I am not being vain... Ugh... Forget it..."

Damn, I hate that magic item--!

"I have never heard of a place called Japan before... But nevermind. Next, state the reason why you want to be an adventurer."

"In order to save the citizens that is being terrorized by the demon king army and..."

-- Ring.

"....."

"... Because being an adventurer seemed to be cool, and it felt like it would be easy to make big money. I want to be popular with beautiful girls too."

"... Ve, very well. Next question. Do you bear any grudge against the landlord? I heard that you had been complaining about your debts."

"Actually, that is because the huge payout from successfully taking down Dullahan wasn't enough to pay the reparation fees of the damage done to the town, that's why it became a debt. It was done to protect the town, but it would be meaningless if the town gets destroyed in the process. I am fine with this outcome."

--Ring.

“.....”

“To be frank, I used words like this to convince my angry comrades. But honestly, for him to treat the heroes who saved the town like this, it makes me want to kill him.”

“I, I see. Then next...”

“Excuse me... can I say something?”

I interrupted Sena who wanted to continue the questioning even though she didn't like it, and said:

“Would you like to just get straight to the point? Like ‘Are you working for the demon king army?’, or ‘Did you give that order because you had a grudge against the landlord?’. I have said this many times, I only asked someone to perform a random teleport, I am not targeting the landlord; I never thought that things would turn out this way. I gave that order because I wanted to save the town. I am telling the truth.”

Sena kept her eyes on the bell as she listened to me.

-- And of course, the bell didn't ring.

After confirming this, Sena sighed heavily.

“... I seem to have been mistaken. Everything I heard about you had been bad rumours, that's why... I am very sorry...”

Sena changed her attitude, becoming more humble and polite as she bowed to me.

I think her earlier tone was meant for criminals, this is her usual manner of speech.

Since I had been cleared of any suspicion, I decided this is a good chance and said:

“Really, listening to rumors without investigating it first, do you know how to do your job, prosecutor?”

“Ugh... Sorry, I apologize...”

As Sena lowered her head in apology, I continued:

“Do you know what my achievements are? I am not just the one who contributed the most in the subjugation of demon army boss Beldia, I am also the one in charge of directing the fight against the destroyer. My stellar performance broke the mobile fortress no one else could defeat! And you didn’t even offer a word of thanks, just endless accusations!”

I leaned so far back that the chair is creaking. Fueled by my grudge of being detained overnight, I started pushing my weight around Sena.

“I, I apologize, this is because of my job...! I know what Kazuma-san had done for the town, but...”

“But? But what? Anyway, now my suspicion had been cleared, why aren’t you serving me tea? What is with this police station! Bringing out a Katsudon is fine too!”

“Pork cutlet rice? Sorry, we don’t have that here... I will serve you some tea immediately...”

Sena left in a hurry, and returned with a cup of brewed tea.

I took a sip...!

“It’s too warm! Don’t the prosecutor here know how to brew tea! And with your fierce attitude you probably don’t have a boyfriend right?”

Since there is a magic item here, it's my turn to ask the question. Do you have any man you are close with?"

"No."

Sena looked at me expressionlessly and said firmly:

"No. Yes, because of my personality, I never had a boyfriend even after living until this age. Are you happy now? I advise you not to go too far."

"Sorry."

Looking at the bell that didn't ring, I apologized fearfully.

"Anyway, what are the bad rumours you heard about me? Just those that were brought up by the adventurers yesterday?"

"Erm, well... apart from those, I heard you stripped the panties off a young girl adventuring with you in public, forced a crusader living in the same house as you to wash your back in the shower. You think your party's priest is troublesome and want to abandon her in a dungeon, all these rumours made you a suspicious character--"

.....

Seeing me turning stiff, Sena looked at me with suspicious eyes.

"... Are they just rumours?"

"Just rumours."

-- Ring.

Sena turned back into her cold poker face and said:

“... That’s just problems within your party, so I won’t make any comments. But do you know what the people call you in the streets? Kazujerk, Kazutrash--”

“How, how mean! Who is the one who gave me that sort of nickname!”

But I knew about the things she brought up, I can’t deny it!

Seeing me like this, Sena sighed and...

“Really. To be safe, I will ask you again. You have no relations to anyone in the demon king army, right? Like an acquaintance of a demon king army boss, anything of this sort...”

“No such thing, do I look that great--”

--Ring.

I didn’t finish saying ‘of a man to you’.

I realized I made a big mistake.

Listening to the echo of the bell reverberating in the interrogation room.

I remembered that Wiz was a demon king army boss.

Part 5

“Hey, there is not enough rice! And give me something with meat on it! Who cooked this! I want to see the lady manager--!”

I was depressed for making this huge mistake, while the delinquent beside me was being noisy.

The man arrested for dine and dash was picking on the quality of the food.

Maybe I should act shamelessly like he does.

... I don't really want to act that depraved though.

"Hey Kazuma, cheer up. I can't count the number of times I was charged in court with all my fingers. You aren't really an adventurer until you have been brought to the police station once. We will both be attending court tomorrow, so we should eat something good and have a good rest. I will get you some nice food! The cops here don't like trouble, so they will bring things over if you complain a bit."

After saying so, Dust started complaining in a volume loud enough to be heard throughout the station.

In the end, the police came over to warn Dust to not push his luck and beat him up. Dust turned quiet and I slept to be prepared for the next day.

-- As it was getting late, I was woken by a tremor and sound of an explosion from a distance, just like last night.

I sat up immediately and heard Aqua's soft voice saying "Kazuma! Hey Kazuma, wake up!"

Hearing her voice, I clinged to the wall with the window and said:

"You are here again. What happened in the end last night? Is everyone fine?"

"Megumin and Darkness were sure they weren't seen by anyone on the way back, but they were still made a suspect for the explosion incident for some reason. The investigation capability of this world is amazing. But never mind that, I forced both of them to wear a hood they hated, so they would definitely not be found out this time."

No matter how you thought about it, the problem wasn't being seen by others while committing the crime, but the limited number of people who could use explosion spell in this town.

"Let's leave that for later, I was waiting for you the entire time, why didn't you escape? I waited until my head was covered in snow, I was even questioned by the police several times, how miserable."

"It's not a lock and key padlock, but a rotating number lock. And I don't have any lockpicking skills at all, there is no way I can do that with just a wire."

Hearing me say that, Aqua was quiet for a moment.

"... They got me this time, I didn't think their prison was so secure."

"It's just a number lock. More importantly, what are you planning to do? If I don't break out tonight, I will be charged in court tomorrow."

Hearing me say that, Aqua snorted a couple of times, she sounded confident.

Where does her baseless confidence stemmed from?

"The method yesterday was too roundabout. I prepared two saws today, I will throw one of it to your side."

... Saw?

"... You want me to saw the window's iron bars and escape?"

"So you do know. The time limit is daybreak, there is no time so hurry!"

After saying that, Aqua threw a saw in through the gaps of the iron bars.

I see, if both of us work together, we could double the speed of cutting the bars.

But the problem is--

"... The window is too high from my side, I can't reach it."

The window was placed high up on the wall to prevent prisoners from breaking out, I couldn't reach it even if I jump.

"Don't worry, I am not stupid, I already thought this might happen. I prepared a stepping stool, you can saw along with me if you used it. There is probably not enough time for one person sawing, but it should be fine with both of us working together."

I see.

"So how do you plan to get the stepping stool in? Squeeze it through the gaps between the bars?"

Aqua was silent for a while after I asked her this simple question.

"... Wait for me a minute."

After saying this, Aqua ran off.

Some time later--

"No, this is... a necessity for Kazuma, I have to give it to him..."

"I have never heard of anyone sending such a thing into a jail cell. And why are you here at this late hour..."

Aqua's voice could be heard in the distance.

She seemed to be trying to get the guards to pass that thing to me.

Maybe I should learn to act as earnestly as that idiot.

Surprisingly, as I listened to Aqua and the guard squabbling in the distance, I was no longer uneasy about going to court tomorrow.

-- To dispose of the evidence, I threw the saw out of the window and slept while wrapped in my blanket.

Part 6

The justice system in this world was very simple. The prosecutor will collect evidence, and the accused will be defended by a representative.

If the judge concludes that the charges are true, he will pass judgement.

There were no lawyers in this world, the accused are defended by his friends.

The building structure was the same as the Japanese courts, the accused in handcuffs and the representative standing in the center of the court. The judge, prosecutor and plaintiff sat opposite them some distance away.

Right now--

No need to be so tense. Don't worry, we will stay by your side."

Megumin said, attempting to calm me down as I was so nervous that my whole body was stiff.

--That's right.

The ones standing beside me as my defence representative were the members of my party.

Why did things turn out like this?

Sitting in the seat of the prosecutor was Sena, who was staring at me, who couldn't hide my nervousness, with cold eyes.

"No problem, leave it to me. The crimson magic race have high intelligence, I will make that prosecutor cry through our debate."

The one to my right making this reliable speech is my defending attorney Megumin.

"Don't worry, if events develop beyond the point of redemption, I will think of a way to help you. You are not at fault for this incident at all."

Darkness who was standing to my left said.

How reliable, I feel at ease... But--

"Just leave it to me! As a woman of the cloth, my words are very convincing! Just leave everything to me!"

That's right, the problem lies with this girl. I asked Aqua to come over and whispered into her ear:

"Listen carefully Aqua. I'm begging you, please don't say anything. If you keep quiet obediently for the entire trial, I will buy snow crimson crab for you."

"What nonsense are you saying? If Kazuma is sentenced to jail or death, you won't be able to buy crab for me. Don't worry, the one most familiar with being an attorney is me. Kazuma likes to play video games right?

Haven't you heard about people in Japan playing 'Based Attorney' and 'Manganronpa'? I played both of them before."

"Okay, I get it now. Please, don't say a word."

Aqua responded to my request by turning her head away unhappily.

This little--!

-- A middle aged man that appeared to be the judge rapped the table with a mallet.

"Order in the court! We will now begin the trial for Satou Kazuma for the subversion of the nation! The plaintiff is Alexei Barnes Alderp!"

On the cue of the judge, a fat man stood up.

He was tall and bulky, his balding head shiny. A middle aged man full of body hair.

So that's the landlord who is suing me.

Landlord Alderp glared at me, as if he was judging my worth. He then used his lecherous eyes to look at the three ladies standing beside me.

After looking at every inch of Aqua and Megumin's body, he turned his sights on Darkness...

And he stood stiffly there with a look of surprise.

"Hey, that fat old man kept looking at us. I feel the presence of evil and have the urge to poke his eyes out."

"I'm pleading with you not to do that... And isn't he only staring at Darkness?"

“He is looking at her for a very long time. His eyes is the same as Kazuma when he is looking at Darkness when she walks around the mansion in flimsy attire.”

“Ugh, hey, you got it wrong. I, I never looked at Darkness with such eyes...”

As I was explaining myself in a panic and looking at Darkness, I noticed she was staring at the landlord too.

“... What’s wrong Darkness? Are you bothered by that old man’s gaze?”

“... Nah, I’m fine, it’s not that... I will tell you later.”

Darkness doesn’t look okay, but I have no time to ask her as the mallet fell again.

“Silence! I will have order in the court. Prosecutor, step forth! We have a magic item here, so any lie will be exposed in this court. Remember this when you speak.”

The judge rapped the table again, and Sena stood up with this cue.

“I will now read out the charges... The accused, Satou Kazuma, took part with other adventurers in the battle against the mobile fortress destroyer when it attacked. He gave the order during the battle to send the Coronatite that was going to explode, away via teleportation. The Coronatite that was teleported exploded after appearing in the mansion of the plaintiff. The mansion of the plaintiff, Alderp disappeared. Right now, lord Alderp is forced to live in an inn within this town.”

As Sena was reading the charges, the plaintiff landlord was still staring at Darkness.

“When transporting monsters, drugs and dangerous items such as explosives, the use of random teleportation is prohibited. It is stated

clearly in the law, and the instruction given out by the accused clearly contravenes this law; Also, threatening the life of the landlord could potentially shake the foundation of the nation. Hence, the prosecution requests for the accused to be found guilty of subversion of the state!"

"Objection!"

It happened right after Sena finished reading the charges.

Aqua who was standing beside me moved in front, raising one arm as she shouted.

"It isn't time for the defendant to speak. Seek permission before you say anything... Well, this is your first time in court, I will give you a pass this time... The defence may speak."

The judge prompts Aqua, but she simply shook her head with a look of satisfaction:

"I just wanted to try saying 'objection', it's okay."

"The defence may only speak when defending the accused!"

This idiot, I really felt like giving her a tight slap.

Aqua who was scolded by the judge right after the court session started seemed contented and returned to my side.

Sena who was thrown off her game seemed to be panicking a little.

"... Eh, that's all I have to say. In short, we are asking for Satou Kazuma to be found guilty of subversion of the nation..."

After Sena finished and returned to her seat, the Judge said:

"Next, I grant permission for the accused and his defence to speak. You may plead your case!"

-- And so, the demon king boss Beldia and the destroyer was only defeated thanks to my efforts. It is strange to accuse me of subversion of the nation with my contribution to the town. In fact, I think that everyone should be complimenting me instead!"

With the permission of the judge, I stated my piece in the center of the court.

I described how cool I was in the fight with Beldia.

Emphasizing how great my coordination was in the battle with the mobile fortress destroyer.

The judge looked at the lie exposing magic bell several times during my statement, but I didn't mind.

I might have exaggerated a little, but I didn't make any of these up.

"Enough, enough, I understand what the defendant is trying to say. Moving on, prosecutor. Please present the evidence showing why the accused should be found guilty of subversion of the nation."

The judge hurried Sena to submit the evidence with an irate face. Sena gave a gesture to a knight standing beside her.

Seeing that, the knight walked towards the waiting room in the court as Sena picked up a piece of paper and read.

"The prosecution will present the evidences, proving the accused is a terrorist attempting to subvert the authority of the nation, or that he is related to the demon king army. Witness, please take the stand!"

With the instruction of Sena, the knight brought the witnesses into the court. They were mostly adventurers.

Or rather--

“Ahahaha... I was summoned...”

The first witness was Chris who was looking at me with a troubled face as she scratched the scar on her face.

Including the thief Chris, the ones summoned to court as witnesses were familiar faces.

Part 7

This situation was bad.

“Which means, the accused used ‘steal’ under the watchful eyes of the public to strip your panties. Is this true?”

“Erm-- it is true! But that should be an accident!”

“You just need to confirm this is true, thank you for your testimony.”

“Hmm? Wait! I’m not bothered by that incident anymore...!”

Sena concluded the questioning in a hurry and chased Chris out of the court.

The other witnesses were troublesome too...

The one who came from Japan just like me, whose magic sword was stolen by me and sold, swordmaster Mitsurugi. He walked to the front with his two underlings right behind him.

“Mitsurugi-san. I heard your magic sword was stolen by the accused and sold. And the two ladies were threatened by the accused that he will steal your panties if you tried to get the magic sword back. Is this true?”

“Yes, you are right. But that incident was started by me...”

“That’s right, he threatened us! He said ‘I believe in gender equality, a man who dares to use drop kicks against girls!’”

“Yeah! He also said ‘since you are girls, I might humiliate you in public using my ‘steal’ skill!’”

Mitsurugi’s two underlings kept interrupting his words, using this chance to get back at me for threatening them that time.

These two girls probably hated me deeply, sticking their tongue out whenever our eyes met.

Ugh... The gaze of the judge and everyone else is hurting me...

After Mitsurugi and the others left the court, Dust was summoned as a witness for some reason.

I didn’t remember doing anything bad to this guy.

If I recall correctly, Dust was the one who suggested swapping teams.

After Dust greeted me warmly, Sena said:

“This man is the defendant of the next court case. I think the court should be familiar with him. He is a delinquent that causes trouble and kept getting sued.”

“Hey you jerk, you are the one who asked for me when I was just waiting for my turn in court. I just got here, so stop speaking ill about me! Are you asking me to massage those big tits of yours?”

Sena's words made the short tempered Dust lash out.

As the Judge was frowning because of Dust's vulgar words, Sena pointed at me and said:

"Dust-san, I heard that you are rather close with Satou Kazuma-san here. Is this true?"

"How could there be any doubt. We are like brothers, and drink together often."

After hearing that, Sena turned and said to me:

"Satou Kazuma-san, are you best friends with this unruly delinquent?"

"Just an acquaintance."

"Hey--! Kazuma!"

Dust yelled, but the bell didn't ring under the watchful eyes of Sena and the judge.

"I, I see, pardon my rudeness. I wanted to bring up the point that your friends are delinquents, that's why..."

"It's fine, it's a fact that I am acquainted with him."

"Kazuma--! Is our friendship so shallow--!"

As the knight dragged the yelling delinquent out of the court, Sena turned to face the judge.

“That last witness was disappointing, but the other witnesses should suffice to prove that the accused has a flawed personality. And the accused bore a grudge against the plaintiff. Based on these facts, it is very possible that the accused didn’t order a random teleport to be used, and instructed for a normal teleport to transfer the stone to the mansion of the plaintiff, and disguised it as an accident--”

Sena tried pinning me down with circumstantial evidence.

“Those are not evidence at all! I admit that Kazuma has a twisted personality, but I can’t accept such a circumstantial charge! Bring out something more concrete! And this trial is too strange! Everything is too forced, don’t you find this weird?”

“The defendants are to watch their words, only speak up when granted permission!”

“You want evidence? Very well, I will bring it undeniable proof! They will show without a doubt that this man is a terrorist determined to destroy the town, or is a minion of the demon king army!”

Seeing Megumin becoming agitated, Sena, picked up a piece of paper and read it out loud.

“One! The party led by adventurer Satou Kazuma might have defeated the boss of the demon king army during the fight with Beldia, but extensive damage was done to the town due to the huge amount of water that was conjured--”

Aqua trembled.

“Two! Setting up a giant barrier in the public cemetery, causing the spirits in the cemetery to wander, creating havoc in town--”

I grabbed the hands of Aqua who was covering her ears and facing the back, peeling them off her ears so she could hear what the prosecutor was saying, and...

"Casting explosion spell in the area outside of town day after day, changing the landscape of the territory. Recently, it could be heard in the wee hours of the night, rousing the citizens from their sleep in the middle of the night--"

It was Megumin's turn to cover her ears and turn around.

My defence team was too useless!

"Hey, wait, this is too strange! It's weird no matter how you think about it! The things you listed out have nothing to do with me! Well, they were troubles caused by the members of my team! But you should bring out evidence that has something to do with me!"

In reply to my outburst,

"And also, we have reports of the accused using a skill only available to the undead, 'Drain touch'. If you are not related to the demon king army, please explain why you can use 'Drain touch'-- You can't just ignore this by covering your ears!"

Sena pointed at me who was covering my ears like Aqua and Megumin and shouted.

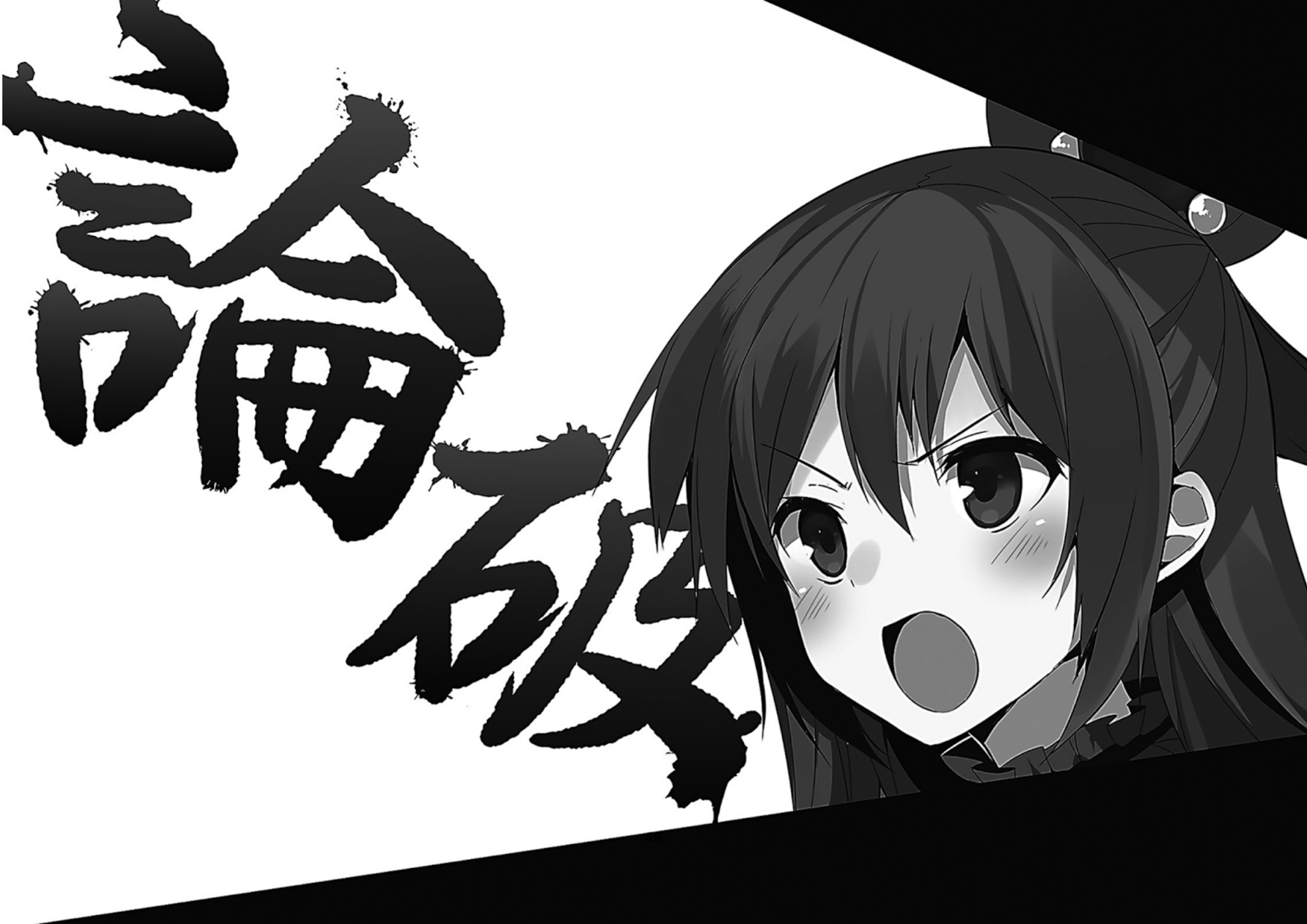
Remain silent! I want to exercise my right to remain silent!

"Finally, the most damning evidence... During the interrogation inside the police station, I asked if you had any dealings with a member of the demon king army. You answered no back then, and the magic item detected a lie. That is the best evidence!"

Oh no oh no oh no--!

I was out of ideas and speechless, at this moment.

-- Hold it!"



This confident voice came unexpectedly from Aqua.

To think this girl would hold a trump card at this juncture...!

“Aqua, tell them! Show them the decisive evidence that proves my innocence!”

“Huh? There’s no way I have something like that, I just want to try saying that.”

“Remove that person from court!”

“Sorry! I apologize on behalf of this counsel!”

“Ahhh that hurts!”

I grabbed the temple of Aqua and squeezed tightly as I apologized.

Shit, this damn idiot--!

At this moment, someone seemed tired of our games.

“Enough! That guy is definitely related to the demon king army! He’s their minion! He sent explosives to my mansion! Kill him! Sentence him to death!”

The plaintiff who had been silent all this while, landlord Alderp stood up suddenly and roared angrily at me.

Well done old man, now's my chance!

"No, I am not related to the demon king army! I am not a terrorist! I do bear a grudge because he made me shoulder that debt, but I didn't send the Coronatite over on purpose! Listen carefully, look at the magic item closely! I am going to say this again! I am not a minion of the demon king army, I have nothing to do with them!"

My words didn't make the bell ring, rendering the landlord speechless.

Sena frowned and bit her lower lips when she saw this.

If a testimony stated in the presence of the magic item could be taken as evidence, my words that didn't trigger an alarm would also be taken as evidence.

The words of the plaintiff landlord helped me out of this situation.

The judge shook his head slowly.

"It is always like this when we use the magic item to detect lies, the results aren't clear. The prosecution motioned for the reaction of the magic item to be endorsed as evidence. But from the results right now, I cannot accept it as legitimate evidence. The circumstantial evidence presented so far is too weak. And so, I hereby judge that the accused, Satou Kazuma innocent from the lack of--"

During this decisive moment when the judge was passing his sentence.

"I will say this again. That guy is definitely affiliated with the demon king army, one of their minions. Sentence him to death."

The landlord who was still standing said that.

In response, Sena said:

“No, no one was hurt for this incident, it shouldn’t lead to the death penalty...”

When she said that to the landlord, he just stared at her.

“... No, you are right. The death sentence is the most appropriate... right?”

-- Hmm!?

“Hey hey, wait a minute! This is too weird, too weird!”

“Yah, what is with that just now! Why did the prosecutor’s argument changed?!”

While Megumin and I were protesting, Sena was reacting strangely too. She was the one who said that, but her face looked confused as she tilted her head.

Aqua suddenly pointed at the judge, Sena and the landlord and said:

“I feel an evil presence! Someone among this group is attempting to twist the facts with evil powers!”

Aqua’s unexpected speech made the court fall into silence.

Maybe it’s due to her idiotic words earlier, all the eyes watching Aqua was doubtful.

Everyone looked towards the magic item, and the atmosphere changed when it didn’t ring.

Aqua was an arch priest, a job with a holy nature.

This made her words more convincing, which made the expression of the judge change.

“Powers of evil... So you are saying someone is using underhanded means to influence this sacred trial?”

“Yes, that’s correct. My eyes are more accurate than that magic item! Truthfully speaking, I am a goddess of water with 10 million devotees in this world! Goddess Aqua!”

-- Ring.

Aqua’s declaration resulted in a crisp ringing sound in the silent court.

“Why--! Wait, I didn’t lie--!”

“Defendant, please choose your counsels carefully.”

“My apologies, I will reflect on this seriously.”

Aqua who lost the trust of everyone was still being noisy as Megumin consoled her; For some reason, the landlord was biting his lips, staring at Aqua with a pale face.

“I get it, it must be because I was acting too vainly. The magic item thought I was lying because of the number of devotees! 10 million is exaggerating a bit, I should had said something in the region of 9.8 million.”

Hearing Aqua mumbling behind me, I wanted to retort that her believers probably numbered less than a thousand. But I can't do that now as the judge could give his verdict any moment now.

The judge cleared his throat.

"... Defendant Satou Kazuma. Taking into account your inhumane actions and your disruption of the peace in order to society..."

He started saying something that contradicted his previous verdict.

"I find the sentence motioned by the prosecutor to be adequate. The accused is found guilty and--"

Hmm!?

"-- Sentenced to death."

Part 8

"This is weird--! No hold it, wait a minute! What is with this rushed verdict! Bring out stronger evidence! Sentencing a man to death so lightly, there must be something wrong with your head!"

"Defendant! Watch your behavior!"

"Kazuma is right, this is strange, there is definitely something wrong. That's right, Kazuma did bore a grudge for having to shoulder the reparation cost of the flood, likes to complains and hates the landlord, which might lead to trouble one day. But despite all that, he doesn't have the guts to send the coronatite over!"

Hey, are you defending me or getting in my way, make it clear!

As I was wondering how to shut Aqua up, Megumin took off her eye patch and said:

“Very well, since you want to think of Kazuma as a terrorist, I will show you what a real terrorist is like... Hey, what are you doing! Release me!”

Seeing Megumin’s crimson eyes glowing, the guards rushed in to subdue her.

“Nah--! This is weird! Too weird! My clear eyes could see evil lingering in the air inside this court! Just wait for a moment I will purify the air right now... Ah! I am not using any suspicious magic, don’t get in my way!”

“Usage of spells are strictly prohibited within the courts! It might interfere with the lie detection magic device!”

“Enough, get the both of them out of here!”

Sena stood up, instructing the guards to bring Megumin and Aqua away.

“Order! Order!... I said order in the court!”

The judge finally lost it, roaring as he threw the mallet.

The guards were dragging Megumin and Aqua away when suddenly,

“-- Your honor, please take a look at this.”

Darkness who had remain quiet without saying a word took something out from her chest.

It was a pendant that looked valuable with an insignia on it.

I don't know what that was, but it was something everyone in court knew about.

"That, that is... You, you are..."

The judge stood up in surprise, staring wide eyed at the pendant.

Under the stares of everyone present, Darkness said softly.

"Pardon me, could you suspend the trial for me? I don't mean getting the prosecutor to throw the case out. I just need time to prove that this man is not a minion of the demon king army, and is innocent. At the same time, I will ask him to compensate the landlord for the mansion.

Sena and the judge stood stiffly as they stared at the insignia presented by Darkness.

Under such a circumstances, only the landlord managed to protest weakly.

"This... But, even if you request for this...!"

"Alder. As the victim in all this, you could count this as me owing you a favor. If it is within my means, I can do anything for you. I am not asking you to withdraw the charges, I just hope you can wait a while longer."

Hearing what Darkness said, the landlord stood where he was and gulped.

"Anything! An, anything...!"

"That's right, anything."

Hearing what Darkness said, the landlord's eyes shone as he looked at Darkness' body lecherously.

He then sat back into his chair:

"Alright, since you are the one requesting, I will grant this man more time."

-- After being granted permission to leave the courts, I asked Darkness who was following behind me:

"What was that just now? Or rather, you knew that old man Alderp?"

"... You could say that. Ever since I was young, he had some kind of obsession towards me. Ever since his wife passed on, he asked for my hand in marriage several times. But my father rejected him due to our age difference."

How terrifying, how persistent is he?

"Are, are you alright, will it be fine to promise doing anything for that kind of old man? From the way he was checking you out, he will probably ask for something horrible."

"... Something, something horrible..."

"You... return my sympathy to me..."

As I was turned off by the pervert who is breathing heavily with her face blushing, I went together with darkness to fetch Aqua and Megumin who were being detained.

Part 9

-- After Darkness' negotiation, the court gave me two orders.

The first is to prove that I am not a minion of the demon king army.

The second thing is to compensate the landlord for his mansion.

In order to raise funds, I brought Aqua along with me to Wiz's shop.

I wanted to come alone, but Aqua kept following me.

"I understand what Kazuma is thinking! You got into all this trouble because of that undead. You are planning to rob her shop to pay off the debts right?"

Aqua who didn't understand anything said spiritedly in front of the shop:

"Get out here you undead monster! I will send you to the other world!"

She shouted something silly as she kicked the door into Wiz's shop open.

"Wha, what? Robbers? The mafia?... Eck--! It's, it's Aqua-sama!"

For some reason, Wiz was afraid of Aqua more than robbers and the mafia.

I moved into the shop, went to Wiz who was terrified because of Aqua and told her the verdict for the case.

"I see... First, congratulations on being released! I am terribly sorry, Kazuma-san. It was all because I teleported that stone..."

"That's right, if you understand then ugh...!"

"Don't worry about it. If Wiz wasn't there back then, we wouldn't have made it through unscathed. It blew the landlord's mansion up, but no

one was hurt. I just need to prove to Sena that I am not a minion of the demon king army to be cleared of any suspicion. But the next problem would be raising the funds to rebuild the landlord's mansion."

I don't know what nonsense Aqua was going to spout, so I covered her mouth and said that to Wiz; Wiz was relieved when she heard that.

"I see, you managed to buy some time. But as for money... I really want to help you, but my shop is losing money, so I don't have much cash on hand... I had a friend back in my days in the demon king army, he was great in making money but was an unfathomable person, I don't understand what he is thinking... It would be great if there is anything I could help you with..."

Wiz said with a troubled expression and started thinking behind her counter.

"No, I am here because you can help me with something."

"That's right. The thing we need your help with, is for you to move on from this world!"

I ignored Aqua's nonsense and discussed with Wiz.

Simply put, with my existing debt and lack of cash on hand, it was difficult to raise the funds to rebuild the mansion of the landlord.

Since that is the case, maybe I should put the plan I thought about in the past into action...

The civilization level here was more backward than earth, people who couldn't use 'tinder' had to rely on flints.

If I start selling lighters in this world, it would definitely be a hit.

But I knew how much skills were needed to make such delicate items.

Even if I managed to make one, it was impossible for any shop to suddenly agree to selling my wares.

That's why I am discussing with Wiz to see if I could display my merchandize somewhere in her store for a while.

-- I explained the whole thing to Wiz.

I told her I would be making some convenient items, and asked for permission to display it in her shop.

If it sells, I will share a part of the profit with Wiz.

I told her that she might want to take a look at the things I made before making a decision.

"It is not easy to make a living with adventuring as a career. Hence, I have to rely on doing business to do so... and the only one I could rely on for such a short notice is Wiz."

"In other words, Kazuma is saying that we will be taking over this shop, hurry up and give us the deed... That hurts!"

I hit the back of Aqua's head with the hilt of my dagger. I lowered my head and asked Wiz sincerely.

Even though she was afraid of Aqua who was nursing her head while rolling on the floor, Wiz still replied with a gentle smile:

"If it is something like this, there is definitely no problem. I would very much like more variety with my merchandize. My shop isn't that popular anyway... And if you are making reparation for the landlord's mansion, I am related to it too... I don't know what you plan to sell, but I am looking forward to it, Kazuma-san."

Seeing Wiz agree with a smile, I smiled along too.

If not for that thing rolling on the floor, the atmosphere would be much better.

... Suddenly, Wiz's expression seemed a bit gloomy.

Her face was full of worries, as if she was wondering whether to tell me about something.

"...? What is it? If there is something bothering you, do tell me. I don't plan to force this upon you, so if there is something you are worried about..."

Wiz waved her hands, gesturing that it was fine.

"No, I am not worried about that! Erm, It is great for me if Kazuma-san is willing to place your merchandize in my shop. It's unrelated to that, it's... about Aqua-sama..."

Wiz started hesitating with a troubled expression.

"...? What's wrong with this girl? Oh, if I put my wares here, Aqua might come over from time to time and cause you trouble? If you are afraid of that girl, I will ask her to avoid coming here."

Aqua might look like that, but she was a goddess after all.

As an undead, Wiz should feel uneasy in her presence.

"... No, that's not it... It's fine for Aqua-sama to visit, but she will talk to the customers when she is here, saying that the merchandize here are made using unspeakable methods by the shop lady, and its better not to buy them..."

"Hey, what is that all about?"

Hearing my low pitch question, Aqua who was nursing her head on the floor trembled for a moment.

"It's, it's fine! It's all in the past now! The amazing thing was, things like holy water inside my shop was wildly popular with the male adventurers, so it's fine..."

Should I say things worked out fine since it sold so well...

But was it okay for a lich to sell holy water?

Furthermore, in all sorts of manner, were the adventurers in this town really fine?

"More importantly... Aqua-sama touches all the merchandize in my shop, causing all the cursed and necromancy items to be purified, many of the items became unusable..."

"What are you thinking you damn goddess!"

Seemed like she had been visiting Wiz's shop and causing her trouble every now and then.

I dragged Aqua up and pushed her head down to apologize to Wiz.

"I am sorry Wiz! For the damaged goods, I will take responsibility and pay using her money! You jerk, don't resist and apologize properly!"

"Wait Kazuma! I don't wanna! And the water being purified after getting in contact with me is because of my holy aura, it can't be helped! It's just like plants photosynthesizing when the sun shines on them, it is automatic! I really can't control that!"

No, you shouldn't touch the merchandize in the first place.

Aqua resisted with her neck and refused to bow down, so I bowed deeply in her place.

I had been forced to bow down to a lot of people because of her recently.

“Please, please raise your head! It’s fine, it’s all in the past now! I just hope she will try not to purify the goods from now on. I had troubled Aqua-sama a lot too, like sending the lost souls in the cemetery to the other world and exorcising that mansion...!”

Wiz bowed in a hurry as she spoke.

When Aqua heard what Wiz said, the culprit that caused the spirit infestation in the mansion because of her laziness in purifying the cemetery averted her eyes.

... You should just switch jobs with Wiz.

Chapter 2: Helping the Crimson Magic girl make friends!

Part 1

“Nah-- Kazuma-- Where is Darkness--? Isn’t she back yet?”

In front of the fireplace in the living room, Aqua, who was seated on the couch she claimed as her private seat, asked in a bored manner while hugging her knees.

-- It had been several days since the verdict had been passed. In order to fulfill her promise, Darkness went off to see the landlord...

But after setting off last evening, she had yet to return.

I remembered the lecherous way the landlord checked Darkness out, and felt stuffiness in my chest.

After all, Darkness would follow her instincts and desires even when she faced a boss of the demon king army, wanting to follow him home.

The situation right now should be to her liking.

I didn't like Darkness in that way, and didn't harbor any feelings of love towards her. If she wanted to go off with anyone, I had no right to stop her.

But she stayed out the whole night after saying she was going to fulfill her promise, which meant she stayed in the hotel room rented by the landlord, and was probably...

"... Ahhhhhhhhhhh--!"

"Hya-- what's the matter? Hey, what's wrong with you, why are you screaming while hugging your head! Kazuma, you are already strange usually, but you are acting especially weirdly today!"

As I was screaming and Aqua was alarmed.

-- Megumin came to our side while hugging something.

Megumin didn't say anything to the two of us who were acting noisy, and just held on to that thing quietly.

-- Or rather, I had been curious about that since long ago.

"Meow--"

The animal known as a cat... That's what Megumin was holding in her arms.

Megumin didn't say anything, and just kept staring at us.

"... You want to keep this thing in the mansion?"

"... Yes. This is a good child, and wouldn't cause trouble for everyone... Is it fine?"

I didn't know where the cat usually hid itself, but I saw it by Megumin's side every now and then.

It allowed Megumin to hug it, squinting its eyes lazily.

"It should be fine I guess? I don't think anyone living here is allergic to cats... Ohh, what's with this guy, she is good with people."

I offered my hand to the cat in Megumin's arm, and she used her paws to play with my fingers.

... This was a dangerous world.

Staying in this party full of problematic children induced a lot of stress.

Maybe I needed a pet that would heal my body and soul.

"That hurts! Why is this cat only clawing me! What is going on, be it the black fur or that arrogant attitude... I can feel the flames of evil emitting from the body of this cat!"

Aqua who was scratched after harassing the cat was furious.

To protect it from the crazy blue haired beast, I took the cat from Megumin's arms.

I turned my back to Aqua and placed the cat onto the carpet in one swift motion, protecting it.

... Speaking of which, we didn't finish the fish we had for breakfast.

"Nah, Megumin. What is the name of this evil beast?"

"Chomusuke."

I picked up the plate with the leftover fish from the dining table...

"... What did you say the cat's name was again?"

"It is Chomusuke."

... I held the leftover fish and squatted before the black cat...

Chomusuke. It must be hard on you to have such a weird owner...

I placed the fish before Chomusuke, but she didn't eat it immediately, and just sniffed it a little.

"Nah, Megumin. That's a female cat right? I don't think that name suits her."

"No. It's name is Chomusuke."

As I listened to the conversation behind me and was looking at Chomusuke.

-- Chomusuke spit out a small burst of fire to grill the fish slightly.



Burning

... What was that?

I hugged my knees and sat on the carpet, watching Chomusuke eat the leftover fish...

"... Nah, Aqua, this cat can spit fire."

I told Aqua softly.

Since the cabbages in this world could fly, cats spitting fire wasn't anything unusual.

"What kind of silly talk is that? Kazuma, are you alright?"

"Cats don't spit fire. Cats are animals that purrs and meows."

"That's right. And they like to eat fish and look cute too."

I know that.

"No, this thing just spit fire, grilling the fish before eating it."

"... Kazuma, you must be tired."

"You were detained in court after all, a lot of things had happened."

"It's true! I'm not crazy!"

I yelled while pointing at Chomusuke. Megumin said:

"Anyway, what were you two arguing about just now? If it is about Darkness, she is not a kid anymore, it's fine even if she didn't return for a few days. Please calm down."

Megumin didn't believe me at all.

"... You are too calm. Do you know what the landlord is doing to Darkness right now? It must be something terrible."

Megumin scoffed at my words.

"He is a landlord after all, what could someone with such status do to Darkness... Wait, I did hear quite a bit of negative news related to this landlord, but Darkness is an adventurer. I don't think she will just let him have his way with her."

This idiot! She don't understand Darkness at all!

"Children are really naive! You spent so much time together with Darkness and you still don't understand that pervert? She will definitely say the following to you with a blushing face, 'Ugh! Even if you have your way with my body, you will never have my heart! I will not yield to you!'"

"!"

After Megumin finally got what was going on, she hugged Chomusuke who was biting into the fish.

"Wha, wha, what should we do! Darkness, Darkness is in danger! What should we do Kazuma?"

"She left yesterday and it had already been one night, so it's too late. Listen up, when Darkness comes back, you have to treat her gently as usual."

"I, I will! Since Darkness has become an adult, we can't ask her what happened either, right?"

"Ahwahah...! Darkness... Darkness, she...!"

Aqua clenched her fist to show that we could count on her while Megumin's face turned pale from helplessness.

If not for Darkness' actions, I would have been executed. I was grateful for what Darkness did for me and had no grounds to complain, but...

... Ah, damn it!

I stress this again, I didn't like Darkness that way or had any feelings for her. Even though there were no feelings of love, I couldn't help feeling frustrated for some unknown reason.

When a female friend hitched up with another guy, that was the complicated feeling I felt back then. At that moment--

"Satou Kazuma! Is Satou Kazuma here--!"

With this angry shout, someone pushed open the door into the mansion suddenly.

The one who pushed the door open in a rough manner was the panting Sena. Her face was red and her shoulders were undulating.

"Hey hey, what are you doing here, there is still some time before the deadline for me to prove my innocence right? Sorry, I don't have time for you right now, my comrade..."

"You say you have no time for me? Don't bullshit me! So you really are a minion of the demon king army! You got guts to cause this mess!"

It was a false accusation, but seeing Sena act so agitated gave me an ominous feeling, so I asked cautiously:

"Wha, what do you mean by this mess...?"

"It's toads! The toads that should be hibernating came out and are moving everywhere outside the town!"

She should be referring to the giant toads that were synonymous with monsters here. But what did such a thing have to do with us...

"Don't frame us for this. Or you are insinuating that we are controlling the monsters and woke the hibernating toads up? Then show me the evidence for that!"

Megumin moved in front, ready for a quarrel.

"According to the reports from the guild staff, the toad seemed to be fearing something when they emerged from the ground... Speaking of fear, it reminds me of someone casting explosion spell not far from town, terrorizing the citizens."

Aqua and Megumin made a run for the interior of the mansion, but I grabbed the backs of their collars before they could get away.

"Wait, let me explain, I only did it because Aqua asked me too! I was the one who did it, but the mastermind is Aqua!"

"How sly Megumin! Weren't you excited when I came to discuss with you? You even said 'let me show you my power!'"

Grabbing the collar of the two who were turning on each other, I said:

"Now is not the time to fight so disgracefully! Go and clean up the mess you made!"

Looking outside, the town was already covered in snow.

Part 2

"No---! I had enough--! I don't want to be eaten by the toads--!"

Aqua's scream echoed out loud.

"But to think the toads are still so agile even in this cold weather. They are moving as fast as usual. Both animals and vegetations are strong around here."

I watched the toads chasing Aqua around on the snow field and commented thoughtfully.

"Because of the harsh environment in this world, all living beings try their hardest every single moment. We mustn't lose to them; we have to become stronger in order to survive in this dangerous world."

Megumin answered my words with a serious expression.

-- While her body below the shoulders was inside the mouth of a toad.

It might be due to her experience of being swallowed by toads earlier that Megumin remained calm in such a situation and did not resist, allowing the toad to swallow her.

Prior to this, Megumin had already casted explosion magic and took out many toads.

Megumin couldn't move after exhausting her mana. The toad didn't continue its swallowing action and stopped moving.

Maybe Megumin's staff was stuck in its mouth.

"Hold on, I will save you."

I raised my sword and faced the toad that was eating Megumin.

"No, it's fine for you to take down the toad chasing after Aqua first. It's cold outside, I prefer the warmth inside the toad's mouth."

I thought this girl was normal aside from her obsession of explosion and didn't expect her to have such great tolerance.

"Why you... One of your comrades is being swallowed by a toad while the other is being chased around, how could you remain so calm?"

Sena who was here as a witness found this strange and asked stupendously.

That might be so, but this was normal for our party.

I decided to save Megumin later. I stuck my sword into the ground and took out my bow and arrow I purchased earlier.

During the invasion of the mobile fortress, I defeated some golems and raised two levels.

After getting the skill points, I was troubled over what skills to learn. After careful consideration, despite having a tough iron wall in Darkness, we lacked someone who could attack from range.

Megumin could be considered as one, but she could only attack a single time, and might drag Darkness into the explosion.

And so, it would be up to me. I might be weak, but I could learn the skills of all the job classes.

Using the uniqueness of this job, I got the archer Keith to teach me the skills 'bowmanship' and 'snipe'.

As its name suggest, 'bowmanship' was a skill that allowed a novice like me to learn how to use bows.

As for snipe, it increased the range of projectiles, raising accuracy proportionally with luck, and was a skill well suited for me.

I nocked an arrow and aimed for the toad chasing Aqua...!

“Kazuma--! Hurry--! Hurry up--!”

Seeing me pull open the bow, Aqua shouted as she fled.

... I felt like letting them chase her for a while longer.

Seeing that I wasn't intending to shoot the arrow, Aqua ran towards me. It made me feel like I might get in danger too, so I had no choice but to fire the arrow at the head of the toad.

The arrow brushed over the top of Aqua's head, and pierced the toad's head.

Aqua who was on the verge of tears continued charging me.

“Well then, I will save you now, Megumin.”

“Nah, Kazuma, were you waiting for me to be eaten just now? Nah, you were going to let the toad eat me right?! And your arrow touched the charm point on my head!”

I ignored Aqua who was pressuring me and pulled out the sword in the ground.

“... Do you always fight in such a dangerous manner? Is... Is this bunch of people really related to the demon king army...?”

Sena was mumbling something as she noted down the ongoing battle.

I raised my sword at the immobile toad to rescue Megumin--

“Wait, there's toads...!”

Megumin who was sticking out from the toad's mouth said tensely.

Aqua and I who were facing Megumin turned when we heard what she said.

"... Ah." x2

Another three giant toads came out of nowhere.

I was cool and collected earlier, but I could feel cold sweat on my back right now.

This was bad, now there were four toads.

In that case, the baits... No, I mean there weren't enough people to distract the toads.

I could snipe them one at a time if there was some distance, but...!

"Aqua, we will split up! I will pull away and try to dispose of one, you continue luring them!"

"I don't wanna--! I don't want to be chased by toads anymore--! You be the bait--!"

"Your attack power isn't enough to defeat toads, stupid! If we can take one down, there will just be two left! We can stop them with you and Sena!"

"Ehh!? I, I am just here to inspect on you, I shouldn't take part in the fight...! And are you planning to use a normal person like me as bait?"

As Aqua was wailing and Sena was shouting, Megumin said:

"Excuse me, I am being swallowed gradually now, you can save me anytime now."

“I’ve had enough, if only Darkness was here! That armored girl wouldn’t be swallowed by toads! When will she come back--!”

As I raised my sword towards the toad preparing to swallow Megumin--!

“Light of Saber--!”

-- A clear voice echoed on the snow field.

At the same time, a beam of light shone across the body of the toad.

A moment after the light faded away, the toad split in half.

As I was busy dragging Megumin out of the toad’s mouth--

“Energy Ignition!”

That clear voice announced again.

At the same time, the three toads closing on us caught on fire suddenly, fire pouring out of their mouth as if they were burning from the inside, morphing into bluish white fireballs.

As I Sniffed the fragrance of cooked toad meat, I used ‘Drain touch’ to share some mana with Megumin since I don’t want to carry Megumin who was covered in goo back.

... And so, Megumin managed to stand up, even though she was still a bit unsteady.

In Megumin’s line of sight was a young girl in black robes.

She was probably a year or two younger than me.

The girl I had never seen before was staring at Megumin.

“That was high tier magic just now...! In this town full of rookies, there was someone who could use high tier magic...”

As Sena who was behind me shouted in surprise, I bowed towards the girl before me.

“I don’t know who you are, but thank you for saving us.”

After I thanked her, the girl stole a glance at me, and seemed a little shy as her cheeks blushed.

“I, I wasn’t planning to save you. It’s just that having my rival eaten by a mere toad will leave a bad taste in my mouth, that’s all...”

She lowered her head and mumbled.

“What? You and Megumin know each other?”

After the toads were defeated, Aqua regained her composure and asked that girl excitedly.

“Rather than know each other, we are more like rivals... -- Long time no see, Megumin! As promised, I have returned after completing my training! As you can see, I can use top level magic freely now! Alright, it’s time to fulfill the promise I made! I will settle our long time rivalry today!”

That girl said as she pointed at Megumin, she seemed really happy.

What kind of hot blooded development was this.

As for the one who was asked for by name--!

“...? Who are you?”

“Ehh!?”

Megumin who was covered in goo said nonchalantly, making that girl shriek.

On closer inspection, that girl seemed to be dressed in a similar way to Megumin.

The black robes and cloak on her body were similar in design with Megumin’s.



She held a silver staff in her hand, and had a short sword sheathed in her waist.

She was slightly taller than Megumin, and had a thin and proportionate body.

She had a determined expression and looked gentle. She was also a great beauty.

If she was in Japan, she would be the class monitor or the student council president; she gave off a model student kind of feeling.

Her black hair was tied together with a ribbon, and the most striking thing about her were her crimson pupils.

That's right, her eye colour was the same as Megumin.

"It's, it's me! You remember right, we were classmates in the home of the crimson magic academy! Megumin was always the top student, while I was number 2! And I said I would go on a journey to train myself until I can use top tier magic...!"

The crimson magic girl pointed at her own face as she explain frantically with teary eyes.

No, what she mentioned casually just now was amazing.

"... Hey, she just said something we can't ignore, something about you being at the top of your school."

Hearing me said that, Megumin smiled softly.

"It has been so long; why are you still saying this? When I first met Kazuma, I already told you I am the best wizard in the crimson magic

race. Kazuma was just too dumb to realize the truth. But after knowing me for so long, it is about time for you to believe me right?"

"If someone believed what you said after seeing you covered in goo, I would want to see how that person looks like."

"Why, why you!"

"Please, please wait a minute!"

Seeing Megumin and I quarreling, the Crimson magic girl interrupted:

"Nah, it's me Megumin! Did you really forget about me? Try to recall how I was always challenging you in everything in school. And you always said I had to place an adequate bet, and would accept if I bet my lunch! And you conned me of my lunch every time!"

So she had been doing this since ages ago.

I looked at Megumin, and she averted her eyes.

"Nah, I think they will take a long time, can I go back to the guild first? Otherwise, the toads' meat will go bad. Can I go get the people from the guild to ferry the toads back?"

Aqua said while she pointed at the carcass of the toads.

To be honest, it would be a pain for me to stay behind alone.

But given our current situation, whatever money we could scrounge helped, so it would be better to send Aqua back to settle this.

And that way, Megumin and I would be able to return to the mansion directly, and I could dump Megumin who stunk like the insides of toads into the shower.

“... Hmm. Seemed like you still have much to talk about. Well then, I will take my leave today... Kazuma-san, your adventure today was pathetic, but I won't throw out the possibility that this was just an act to deceive me... I can't trust you yet.”

After looking at me with stern eyes, Sena returned to town together with Aqua.

Part 3

After being left behind on the snow field, I asked Megumin once again:

“And so, why did she keep saying she know you? She seemed to know you very well, so remember her quickly alright?”

“I don't know her. And she didn't even mention her name, that is suspicious. This must be the scam Kazuma told Aqua that she mustn't pull, that 'it's me it's me' scam. You must absolutely not trust her.”

<TL: goo.gl/42GwmX>

Megumin pulled on my hand after saying that and wanted to leave.

Seeing that we were planning to leave for town, that girl said in a hurry:

“Wait, wait--! I, I know, it is embarrassing to do this in front of others, but I will introduce myself!... I am Yunyun. An arch wizard, wielder of top tier magic. The one who will be the chief of the Crimson magic race in the future...!”

After Yunyun introduced herself with a blushing face, she flicked her cloak.

Does the Crimson magic race have a culture of making exaggerated performances when introducing themselves?

As she looked at Yunyun, Megumin said to me:

"That's how it is. She is Yunyun, the daughter of the Crimson Magic village chief. She claims to be my rival during our school days and will inherit that position of village chief in the future."

"Okay. I am this girl's adventuring comrade Kazuma. Nice to meet you, Yunyun."

"So you do remember me!... Hmm, this is strange. Kazuma... san? Erm, why didn't you laugh after hearing my name?"

Yunyun was confused and asked me timidly.

After getting used to Megumin's name, I didn't think much about the weird names of the Crimson magic race.

"Your name is just a bit strange, that has nothing to do with your personality right? In this world, there is someone who has a strange name and leaves a deep impression, but is referred to by the infamous nickname 'explosion girl with a screw loose'."

"Is that me? Are you talking about me? That nickname stuck on before I even knew it!"

Hearing me say that, Yunyun showed an astonished and surprised expression:

"... I see, as expected of Megumin, you found a good comrade. You are my rival indeed."

For some reason, her impression of me seemed to be improving.

"Anyway, do you want to talk about this at another place? It's inconvenient to talk while standing around here."

Hearing me say that, Yunyun remembered something, lifted her head and moved away from Megumin and me.

“It’s all because Megumin pretended not to know me; that’s why things seemed so weird...! Megumin, I am here to settle things with you! I am the one who will be the chief of the Crimson magic clan! If I don’t defeat you, how could I be so shameless to take the position of chief in the future! And most importantly!”

Yunyun lifted her hand and said while pointing at Megumin:

“As promised, I learned top tier magic. Next I will be defeating you and getting the title of strongest in the crimson magic clan. That way, no one can fault me when I take the position of chief. I won’t let anyone say I depended on my family connections! Come Megumin, let us duel!”

With resolve in her eyes, Yunyun declared in front of Megumin.

“I don’t wanna. It’s freezing outside, and my body temperature is starting to drop.”

Hearing Megumin said that matter of factly, Yunyun said “Hmmm---” and stood there stiffly.

“That’s settled then, let’s go back. I will heat the water up, so go wash up first. After your bath, we will all have a meal together.”

After I said that and was about to leave together with Megumin...

“Wait, wait wait! Nah, why? We didn’t see each other for so long, why are you treating me so coldly? Megumin, please duel with me okay--!”

Seeing us move, Yunyun stopped us in a hurry.

Megumin sighed:

“... But I can’t use magic anymore today, my mana is exhausted. And you were planning to duel with me using magic? Kukuku... You underestimate my strength. With just my strength alone, I vaporized eight foolish toads in just one shot. Yunyun, can you do that?”

Megumin lowered her tone, saying this in a Chuunibyou manner. Yunyun looked at me with a surprised expression.

She was probably asking me if this was true.

“Yeah, she did vaporize eight toads with just one spell.”

But she couldn’t move after that and was eaten though.

Hearing my confirmation, Yunyun turned pale and gulped with her head down.

“You weren’t in this town so you might not know... But did you heard about these rumours? A boss of the demon king army was tricked by me and lured to this town by my constant threatening explosion spell casted at his castle, and was defeated. The mobile fortress destroyer that claimed to be invulnerable was blown up by explosion magic in this town!”

After hearing all that, Yunyun alternate her gaze between Megumin and me with fear in her eyes.

... She didn’t lie.

“Well, the boss of the demon king army did came to town because Megumin casted explosion magic daily, and the one who dealt the final blow to the destroyer was definitely Megumin.”

That’s one way to look at the truth...

After I said that, Yunyun’s face turned deathly pale.

"E, E, Even so, I still want to duel! I have to duel...! No matter how slim my chances are, I will keep challenging you!"

Even though she was blinking away tears, there were things she would never back down from. Yunyun was afraid, but she still announced this steadfastly.

Seeing this, Megumin sighed heavily once again.

"... You are really troublesome. How about this, since I can't use magic anymore today, how about sparring physically? You are an adventurer now, so competing in academic test should be unacceptable for you right? No weapons; we will battle until one of us surrenders... Is that fine with you?"

Yunyun said with a surprised expression:

"... Is that really fine? That Megumin who skipped most of the physical education classes... Could it be... You want to let me win? That Megumin who kept walking before me during lunch, and rob me of my lunch when I challenge her?"

"... You are really a good-for-nothing."

"... That was a matter of life and death for me. Because of the circumstances in my family, her lunch was my lifeline. If I take the initiative and challenge her, wouldn't that be the same as extortion?"

Yunyun closed her eyes.

She took a deep breath and smiled brilliantly.

"I understand, we will spar then... I know what you will say next. 'If you want to challenge me, you have to place an adequate bet!' The bet this time is this Manatite crystal. This has great purity and has high quality! An item all mages craves for!"

Yunyun took out a small jewel.

With the name mana, it should be jewel that contains mana.

Megumin looked at that thing and gave a satisfied nod.

"Very well, I will accept your challenge! Well then, come at me sis!"

Megumin opened her arms in a taunting stance and announced.

Opposite her, Yunyun lowered her stance and clenched her fists.

From the looks of it, Yunyun has the advantage in size.

Yunyun was taller, bigger and has longer limbs with proportionate muscles; In contrast, Megumin doesn't look like a proficient melee fighter no matter how loose the standard was.

The impression Megumin gave was a little girl you can find anywhere, a weak mage.

Yunyun closed in slowly.

Megumin maintained her open arms posture, ready to grab Yunyun anytime...

"... Nah, Megumin. Hold on... Erm, you seemed a bit wet and shiny, is that..."

"That's right~~ it's goo from the toads."

Megumin answered Yunyun's uneasy question immediately.

Yunyun's face became twisted immediately, but Megumin ignored her and continued:

"Thank you for saving me just now. This slimy thing all over me are fluids secreted from the stomach of the toad... Enough about that, attack me. The moment you come near, I will hug you without reservation, and wrestle with you."

Megumin declared with her arms wide open, advancing slowly bit by bit while Yunyun backs away with a disgusted face.

"Me, Megumin? Don't joke like this, you are not serious right? This is just a strategy to diminish my will to fight and trick me to surrender right? Right? You always do that when we were in school. I, I won't be fooled anymore!"

Yunyun put on a strong front as she backed away, but Megumin got closer to her slowly, her crimson eyes shining.

Megumin's face looked like a kid who wanted to pull a prank on a friend.

"We are friends right? Real friends must go through thick and thin together."

When she heard what Megumin said, Yunyun turned back and ran.

Megumin chased after her.

"Surrender! I surrender! I will give you the mana crystal, so please don't come over!"

Part 4

Megumin smeared goo all over Yunyun, making her leave in tears. We made our way back to the mansion.

“Ah, Kazuma, take this. It should sell for a good price. Clear some of the debts with this.”

On the way back, Megumin gave me the Manatite crystal.

I remember Yunyun saying this was something any mage would want.

“Is that fine? Why not keep and use it? I don’t know how to use it though.”

Megumin laughed softly when she heard my question.

“Manatite crystal is a convenient item that could take the place of mana when casting spells. But it is just a consumable item. From the purity and size of that crystal, it is not enough to sustain the massive mana expenditure of explosion spell. That thing is precious for normal wizards, but useless to arch wizards like me who cast magic on a grand scale.”

She’s saying this so arrogantly...

“... Isn’t that a good thing? Nah, I will say this any number of times, don’t you want to learn skills other than explosion...”

“I don’t intend to.”

“I thought so.”

Hearing Megumin’s immediate reply, I sighed heavily.

Never mind, I couldn’t force her. And there were times when she was dependable too...

..... Were there ever such a time?

There girl named Yunyun used high tier magic.

She took down the toads elegantly in no time.

And apart from magic, she looked pretty good too. A pretty face and a nice body.

Compared to that excellent mage...

"... What is it? Why are you sighing... Aside from powerful magic abilities, the Crimson magic race also has high intelligence. I can tell what Kazuma is thinking about."

Seeing me sigh as I walk, Megumin asked with a face full of doubt.

.....

"... I was thinking that... compared to that girl, Megumin is much prettier."

"Thank you for your compliment! As thanks, I will give you a tight hug!"

"Stop, stahp! Don't come near me, you still stink like a toad!"

-- I opened the door to the mansion and saw that Aqua had not returned yet.

I was hoping to find Darkness here, but there was still no sign of her.

My back was feeling all sticky so I walk briskly towards the shower room.

"Ugh... It stinks... This was the first time I am unhappy about a hug."

"You should be happier about it. Some people are willing to pay for a girl covered in goo to hug them."

Megumin who was following behind me said nonchalantly.

-- As I headed into the changing room, Megumin tugged on the corner of my shirt.

"... What."

"The goo is making me uncomfortable, let me bathe first."

"I am uncomfortable too, and this is your fault. And if I don't go in first, there is no way to heat the water up. Our heater needs mana to work, so you can't use it since your mana is depleted. The mana I shared with you can only produce lukewarm water. If you understand, wait obediently in front of the fireplace for me to finish."

I waved my hand, gesturing Megumin to leave. She said with a displeased face:

"If I don't wash away the goo and sit before the fireplace, my robes will stink after it dries. Haven't you heard of ladies first? Men should take care of ladies."

"I am someone who sincerely wishes for equality for all genders. I hate people who push for chivalry when the situation benefits them, and complain about men when they are at a disadvantage. And if you are not old enough to be a lady anyway."

"Ah! You are treating me like a kid! We are just three years apart okay! Ten years later, we will be 23 and 26, there's not much difference..."

"The future is the future, the past the past. I am a man who live in the present. In my eyes, you are a child right now, that's it. Alright then-- I will be the first one to shower!"

As I was saying this, I headed into the bathroom and light the magic heater. I then took off my shirt that was covered in goo.

“You are really stripping!”

Megumin was surprised by my actions, but I didn’t feel anything about a kid seeing my naked body.

“I will need to charge if you want to watch anymore. I will not back down. Never.”

Megumin bit her lips vexingly, and then laughed when she remembered something.

With a smile confident of victory, she taunted:

“... I see. I understand, Kazuma doesn’t see me as a woman right now. Then how about bathing together. Since you don’t see me as a woman, there should be no problems right?”

“You are right, there won’t be any problems if we bathe together. I will go in first.”

“Eh!?”

Seeing me reply nonchalantly, Megumin who made the suggestion was surprised.

“Ex, excuse me, shouldn’t the next development be you saying something shyly like ‘Id, idiot, it will be nice if we can actually do that’, and then let me go first unwillingly right?”

“Why do I have to follow such a cliché script? Let me tell you first, I won’t be restrained by normal practices. Let me give you an example. Let’s say Megumin falls for me. And some other girl starts flirting with me and Megumin become jealous. If you use violence on me unreasonably, I will not hesitate in fighting back. I will do the right thing when the time comes, you better remember that.”

“... I underestimated Kazuma. Don’t worry, I will never fall for you. And that’s not how you use the phrase ‘do the right thing at the right time’, but never mind.”

After stating her piece, Megumin seemed to have given up and walked out of the bathroom. And so I...

“Oh? After taunting me about it, you are not going to bathe together with me? You gutless girl. That’s why I see you as a kid.”

“You say I have no guts? How dare you, it’s just bathing together; you think I am scared?! Stop covering with your towel and hurry up!”

“Hey you jerk, let go, don’t pull my towel you pervert! Why are you so open about this! Did that girl Yunyun ever tell you that you are like a boy? You are too carefree about this, watch yourself!”

Megumin took off her robe without hesitation, covered her body with a towel and walked into the bathroom.

--Weird?

For an instance, I thought I saw some sort of tattoo on Megumin’s butt through the gaps of her towel.

“The water is not warm enough pump more mana in, more mana! Come here, hurry up!”

Megumin yelled after putting her hand into the bathtub.

Did I see it wrongly?... Never mind, forget it.

Part 5

“Fu...”

“Fu... it’s nice to bath leisurely during day time... I think I can fall asleep here...”

I soaked my shoulders under the water in the wide tub, and stretched my limbs out to relax.

A big bathtub was the best point about this mansion.

“By the way, are you going to ignore that girl named Yunyun? Hasn’t it been a long time since both of you met?”

“We will meet again soon enough anyway. That girl claiming to be my rival loves to chase after me.”

Megumin soaked her shoulders into the water and kept her chin near the surface of the bath tub. Her eyes were close and she seemed to be enjoying herself.

“The name Yunyun might be a bit off, but she looks cute. For an acquaintance of yours, she seemed to have good manners and common sense.”

“Are you insinuating that I lacked common sense? And she is my age, why aren’t you treating her like a child?”

While keeping her chin at the edge of the water, Megumin opened one eye and stole a glance at me.

Megumin is the same age as that girl... I took a good look at Megumin who was soaking in the bath.

"... Hey, tell me what you are thinking while you are looking at my body."

"... I am thinking that the speed of growth is different for everyone... Hey, stop that, don't chant explosion magic! I know you have exhausted your mana, but this is not good for my heart!"

As I said that, I copied Megumin's posture and moved my chin to the edge of the water.

"But that means she is just thirteen years old. My strike zone is two years younger than me, so thirteen is out. If she is fourteen, that would make us middle two and high one, which is borderline acceptable for me."

<TL: Middle school year two and High school year one.>

I muttered casually.

"Middle two and high one?... I am not sure what you mean, but I will be fourteen next month. You won't treat me like a kid after that?"

Megumin who was relaxing in the bath said with her eyes closed...

"... Huh, are you serious? Your birthday is next month? Eh, fourteen? you're graduating from being a loli character?"

"Who is a loli character! I don't recall making such a character! And... what's with you? Why are you acting strange all of a sudden..."

Someone I thought of as an incapable young sister was gradually morphing in my mind into an incapable school junior...

“We, well, I suddenly think this situation is a bit embarrassing.”

“Hey, don’t say that all of a sudden, that will make me feel embarrassed too! What’s wrong with you? Is just one year older that much of a difference? And can you stop stealing glances at me so shyly!?”

Why? It’s so strange, and my heart started racing.

At this moment, I realized I was in an incredible situation.

“... Nah, why am I bathing together with Megumin? Thinking carefully, isn’t this situation bad?”

“Why are you saying this now! Don’t calm down so suddenly!”

Megumin started inching away from me in the pool.

I also backed away from the other end and told Megumin:

“Not that, I mean if someone see us like this, we can’t just laugh it off right? That should be some kind of law or rules governing this. Especially a girl that can’t read the mood will tend to...”

Before I finished my sentence.

“I’m home--!”



From the distance came the voice of that girl who can't read the mood.

"It's all your fault Kazuma, saying things that would trigger this flag!"

"Now is not the time to discuss this! Anyway, one of us need to get out now!"

Megumin and I got out of the tub at the same time, and returned immediately.

"Why are you getting out together with me! The towel is soaked, I already saw a lot of you, and you saw a lot of me!"

"You are one to say! I will get out first, you stay in there! Did you lock the door? Did you lock the door into the changing room?"

"No, no I didn't lock it! Aqua will definitely come here at a time like this! What should we do! Think of something quick!"

What is there to think of, one of us just need to exit the bathroom and it will be fine!

If Aqua was to see us like this, she will definitely not let me off, and give me nicknames like LoliNEET, Lolima and spread it all over town!

"Kazuma--! Megumin--? I am home--! Will someone welcome me back?! I sold the toad and brought the money back--!"

Aqua's voice was getting closer.

I got out of the bathtub hastily and charge towards the changing room.

As I ran, the thumping footsteps draws near...

"Kazuma--!... What, so you are bathing?"

Aqua seemed to notice I am in here.

The moment before the door to the changing room was about to open, I used all the mana within me and stretched my right hand out, concentrating like never before!

"Freeze--!"

Using all my mana, the 'Freeze' I bet everything on froze the door handle of the changing room door in an instant. Fatigue and weakness assaulted me after I exhausted all my mana, and I collapse onto the floor.

"Kazuma-- I left both of your share of the money on the table in the living room! Let's grab a bite after you finish your bath!"

After that, Aqua left without opening the door.

... That make sense. If she knew someone was inside, why would she open the door and look at my naked body, this is not a manga.

"Are... are you okay, Kazuma? Did you deplete your mana? I should say that was a close one. If things escalates..."

"I would be labeled a lolicon. Too close... ah, Megumin, sorry to trouble you, but can you help me wipe my body? I am completely out of mana and can't move. I will catch a cold if I lie down here."

I lay face down on the floor, asking for her help without seeing Megumin's face, but...

"... Hey, why will you be labeled a lolicon if you bathe with me, explain clearly. You have guts to say such things when you can't move."

“Hey, stop it asshole! Why are you grabbing my towel! You want to be labeled a pervert?! Hey...! A, Aqua--! Aqua--! There’s a loli molesting me--!”

Part 6

Aqua barged into the room after hearing me crying for help, and bestowed on me the nickname of LoliNEET.

The second dinner that felt a bit lonely without Darkness ended without incident.

-- The next morning.

“... The two of them are out early.”

I muttered to myself when I reached the living room.

After discussing with them last night, we reached the consensus that going on quests without Darkness was too dangerous.

So we decided to act on our own for today.

... Darkness didn’t return last night.

I heard the landlord was very obsessed with her. Was she being detained?

Or she had some accident...?

If she didn’t come back tonight, I would need to take actions.

It was too troublesome to make breakfast for myself, so I decided to eat out. As I was wandering around town, I saw a familiar crimson magic girl.

That girl was strolling along the street while looking at the food in the stalls. She looked as if she wanted to eat.

In the end, she hung around the kebab stall, observing it.

A short while later, a customer came to the stall, chatted with the owner a while, and left after buying three kebabs.

After seeing that, the girl made up her mind, and bought three kebabs just like the previous customer.

... Seemed like this was the first time she was buying things here, and was unsure of how to place orders.

I was hesitating about approaching her, but looking at how happy she was eating the kebab, I decided to leave her alone.

“-- Strange monsters are appearing near town, it is not strong, but...”

“Right, I heard about that too. That thing has a weird shape, and will grab onto anything that moves and detonate, right?”

I had breakfast at a random shop, and heard two adventurers talking about this topic while wandering around town.

... Strange monsters?

To me, most of the monsters in this world are strange.

I will be careful of that anyway.

As I was thinking about that while strolling, the girl I saw earlier appeared before me again, walking around the target shooting game stall this time.

The target shooting game was different from Japan. It used real bows, and arrows with a round end. Most of the players were couples, with the guy shooting, and gifting the prizes to the ladies.

I see, couples visit this street often, it's something akin to the holy grounds of dates.

The stall was targeting lovebirds going on dates.

This was obvious from the prize displayed in front of the store.

That girl was probably too shy to play the shooting game by herself. She waited for all the couples to vacate completely before she started challenging the game.

Maybe she wasn't proficient with bow and arrows, but she couldn't hit the prize she wanted no matter how many times she tried.

After that girl challenged many times, another couple came in to play the game. She returned the bow to the owner and was about to leave in shame.

.... Hmmm...

Strictly speaking, her relationship with us should be rather bad since her rival was in my party, but...

I walked towards that girl and said hi casually.

"...? Ah! Erm, hello, Kazuma-san...!"

-- I didn't even look at Yunyun who greeted me, handing my money to the owner of the shooting game stall directly.

"Snipe!"

Using my sniping skill, I hit the prize Yunyun wanted in one shot.

The prize that was hit and fell was a samurai like doll that looked a little like Jack Frost.

"Here, you want this right?"

I grabbed the prize and handed it to Yunyun a bit cockily.

If I was in Yunyun's shoes, it wouldn't be surprising for me to fall for me because of that.

Yunyun's cheeks turned red and hesitated for a moment, unsure if she should accept.

Moments later, she smiled brilliantly and said:

"Thank... Thank you..."

"Customer, you can't do that. Can't you read the sign? No archers and 'snipe' ability users allowed. You can keep the prize, but you have to pay me three times the fees."

-- I didn't look very cool as I apologized to the owner while topping up the fees.

"Well then, I am still looking for my party mates, see you."

I was a bit embarrassed, so I raised a hand and said that to Yunyun as I prepare to leave...

“Hmm? Ah... Erm...”

Yunyun looked as if she wanted to stop me, reaching a hand out for me...

But she withdrew her hand halfway, putting it on the doll in her arms and bowed to me.

“Erm, thank you, thank you for getting Jack Frost for me!”

So that doll really is Jack Frost.

Because of my trauma of being killed by that guy, I had the urge to shoot the doll with a real arrow. But since she looked so happy, I will let it go.

-- After parting ways with Yunyun, I started strolling around town once again.

With how prominent my party mates were, finding them should be a breeze.

“Alright, next challenger--! Is there no one else--?”

Following the source of that noise, I saw a crowd gathering around a spot.

This piqued my interest and I went closer. I found the people there to be bulky and fit, guys who obviously lifts.

I observed the situation...

“Alright! I’m next!”

The one who stepped up was a man with bulging muscles, who looked like an adventurer.

It was hard to judge what his job was, but from his body type, he was probably a vanguard.

The man picked up the hammer prepared by the store owner...

“Warrgghhhh!”

And swung down mightily.

The hammer slammed on top of a certain rock.

When the hammer impact on the rock, it created plenty of sparks.

After the pounding by the hammer, that rock was...

“Damn, this is still not enough...”

Just as the vexed man said, the rock was as good as new.

When the stall owner saw that, he shouted loudly:

“My friend here didn’t succeed either! The prize is now 125,000 Eris! The entrance fee is 10,000 Eris! For every challenger that loses, the prize will increase by 5,000 Eris! Is there anyone else who is confident in your arm strength? Magic is fine too! This is Adamantite, if you can break this thing, you will be known as a top class adventurer! Come, is there anyone else who wants to test their might?”

I see-- business comes in all sorts of form.

As I was contemplating on starting a business myself, this was a good place to learn.

But with my skill and strength, it was pointless for me to challenge this.

... In the direction I was looking at incidentally, I said to the figure I saw for the third time today:

“... We meet again, Yunyun.”

Seeing Yunyun who was clenching her fist as she watched the adventurer swung their hammer, I greeted her on reflex.

She claimed to be Megumin’s rival, so I thought she will be hostile towards me. But from her reaction, I didn’t think she disliked me.

Yunyun saw me...

“Ah! Thank you for your help just now Kazuma-san! Look at that! Everyone is taking up the challenge of smashing the adamantite!”

She said with her eyes sparkling.

In the village of the crimson magic clan, are there no gaming stalls like this?

“Yunyun can use top tier magic right? Want to give it a try? The owner said spells are permitted.”

After hearing that, Yunyun said:

“I can’t break adamantite with my powers... That requires powerful implosion magic. Leaving the destructive explosive explosion spell aside, implosion magic should be fine. But using explosion magic is the safest bet...”

She said with a wry smile.

As we were chatting, more people went up to challenge and failed.

The prize money was over 200,000 before we knew it.

The crowd was getting bigger, and the owner of the stall yelled to raise the tension higher:

“Is adamantite too difficult for the people in this town? I came here because I heard this town took down the mobile fortress destroyer! Is there no one who could break this stone? Hey hey hey! Is there no other challenger?”

As the stall owner was getting into his groove, the adventurers pushed each other, gesturing for each other to take up the challenge.

Everyone knew what the stall owner’s tactic was, but it still felt vexing if no one breaks the rock.

-- As the adventurers on scene stared at each other.

One young girl step forth from the crowd.

She wasn’t in her usual robe, but a black dress for traveling in town. My party mate moved forward and puffed out her chest.

She had the same determined arrogant face she had when she faced off against the destroyer.

“-- The main character’s turn.”

The moment Megumin said that, all the adventurers including me rushed in to restrain her.

Part 7

“Hey, I’m just an innocent girl, treating me like this is too much.”

I locked Megumin's arms and neck from behind, ready to cover her mouth if she started chanting.

On either side of her was well built adventurer grabbing her hand tightly.

"Hey old man, stop doing your business since this girl noticed you! She is an infamous explosion maniac in town. Your business is too stimulating for her!"

Hearing me said that, the stall owner turned pale and started packing in a panic.

Megumin started struggling when she saw that.

"Ahhh! I can break it! I can definitely break that stone with my explosion spell!"

"Run! Hurry old man!"

"Yick--!"

After finished packing, the stall owner started sprinting at full speed.

Megumin saw him off with a face of regret.

After confirming the old man had escaped, we released our hold and Megumin regained her freedom.

As the crowd disperse, I said to Megumin:

"... Really, for people who gets into trouble while I am not looking, Aqua is more than enough. Anyway, you are not together with Aqua?"

“Nope, she wanted to go somewhere else so we split up. The payout from defeating the destroyer gave the town an economic boost, gradually attracting all sorts of people here. There was someone performing in the streets for money from tips, but he was driven to tears when Aqua did free performance that was more amazing beside him.”

How, how pitiful...

I thought about doing something about that girl, but it would be a bother if I got entangled in their squabbles.

He might be pitiful, but I decided to leave Aqua to that busker..

Megumin tugged on my sleeve.

“Let’s walk together since we ran into each other. There is someone over there who is doing something similar to the guy that ran off. I want to loiter around him to scare him.”

“I thought you are a girl with common sense aside from your explosion maniac personality.”

As Megumin and I chatted as we prepared to leave, we heard someone calling out to us from behind:

“Ah...”

I turned back and saw Yunyun looking at us with a lonely expression.

“... Want to come along with us?”

Yunyun made a happy expression for an instance when I said that, but she reverted back when she saw Megumin and shook her head.

"I, I came to this town in order to defeat Megumin! I'm not here to build a friendship with her! I am grateful for the shooting game just now, thank you very much! But... I can't come along with you two!"

Yunyun hugged the doll that I hated before her chest and took a large step away from us.

"Since she doesn't want to, let's go Kazuma."

"Oh, right...."

When we left, Yunyun seemed to be rejecting us, keeping her back to us.

"..... Sigh....."

In the end, Yunyun let out a depressed sigh, slumped her shoulders and walked away with heavy steps.

She then look back longingly.

... And locked eyes with the two of us who were walking a few steps behind her after we brought something like crepes from the stall nearby.

"..... Erm, why are the two of you following me?"

"I was thinking that I will be able to see your lonely and sulking face if I follow behind the Yunyun who is alone as usual."

When she heard that, Yunyun pounced on Megumin.

Part 8

"Among the Crimson magic race, Yunyun was well known for being ashamed of being a weirdo that is ashamed of her own name. In school, she spent most of her time eating alone. If I loiter around Yunyun who was eating alone, she will happily challenge me, works every time..."

“Wait! It’s, it’s not that bad... it shouldn’t be... right... fine, it’s true, I challenged you every day, but I am not lonely at all, I have friends too.”

The three of us chatted as we walked out of town.

After talking for half the day, the two of them decided to have another duel.

Megumin stopped when she heard Yunyun said that.

“I can’t just ignore what you just said... Yunyun... have friends...?”

“Why, why are you reacting like this! I have friends too alright! Megumin should know too. Like blah and blah, they say we are friends, I even invited them to lunch before...”

Hey, stop it, I can’t bear hearing anymore.

... This seemed to be the situation. The Home of the Crimson magic was full of weirdos, and this child was the only one with common sense, so she stood out from everyone else.

How pitiful...

“And so, what shall we compete in today? I can only use explosion magic, so I don’t really want to fight with spells.”

“... That’s right. You should learn some other spells too. You should have saved quite a bit of skill points by now.”

“I did. I used all of them for ‘explosion power raise’ and ‘speed chanting’...”

“Idiot! Why are you so obsessed with explosion magic!”

Good, tell her more.

“But that’s really troubling... what should we duel in...”

As Yunyun was troubling about that, Megumin said:

“Anything is fine, I am not a kid that is bothered by winning or losing anymore.”

Hearing the loli say that casually, Yunyun smirked softly.

“Not a kid anymore? I remember we competed in our degree of growth before. Since you say you are not a kid anymore, want to try that again?”

Facing Yunyun’s taunt, Megumin simply said:

“No, I mean I am not a kid anymore in another way. My relationship with Kazuma had progressed so far that we even bathed together before.”

“!”

“Hey! Shut it, don’t tell others about that!”

“!?!”

After hearing my conversation with Megumin, Yunyun’s face turned red, her mouth open and shut and her entire body turn stiff.

“... It’s, it’s my loss today--!”

After saying that, Yunyun ran away in tears.

Megumin and me stood in place for quite a while.

Megumin then took something out and started writing.

Looking closely, it looked like a notebook.

She wrote the date for today and marked a small circle beside it.

"I won today too."

"You, you... Is this really fine...?"

-- After seeing Yunyun running off wailing, Megumin and I decided to return to the mansion.

"Ara, you are back. Nah, look look. There was a guy busking in the streets, he said he don't need it anymore and gave it to me. He seemed to be planning to inherit the farm in his home town. I don't understand why, but that is lucky!"

When we got home, I saw Aqua sitting on the couch in the living room, toying with some trinkets happily.

After breaking the heart of the busker, she took his tools of the trade.

I wanted to tell her not to disrupt the lives of other people, but...

"Darkness is still not back... She should be coming back tonight right..."

Watching Aqua playing deftly with the trinkets, Megumin muttered.

-- In the end, Darkness didn't came back today.

Chapter 3: Gifting the aristocratic lady with marriage!

Part 1

“Hey, Aqua, don’t make me waste my breath every time and give up that seat. Since Darkness isn’t back, we won’t be doing quest today either. I need to design the merchandize to be displayed in Wiz’s shop, get out of my way.”

Hearing me say that, Aqua who was hogging the spot on the couch before the fireplace as usual squinted her eyes as she yawn and said:

“Why are you so irritable? You are too hysterical lately, you don’t need to act this way even though Darkness isn’t back yet alright? Enough about that... I heard that girl Yunyun said something to Megumin. You have to pay the adequate price for everything. If you want me to give this warm place to you, you have to give me something that satisfies me. Let me think, specifically speaking...”

Aqua paused and pondered for a moment.

“... If thou wish for the place the goddess resides... offer high class wine to me. Warm light will then shine a path for the lost NEET.”

I should give her a tight slap.

Megumin too, why was she teaching her unnecessary things.

“Hey, fallen goddess, if you have the time to ask for wine early in the morning, you should think of a way to make money. Really, why do I have to work so hard. I will work on the debts from blowing up the mansion of the landlord, you take care of the reparation for the flood. If you feel any guilt at all, then move aside.”

Hearing me address her as fallen goddess, Aqua looked at me with displeasure:

“Hey, stop giving weird names okay? Useless goddess, fallen goddess or whatever. If you keep addressing me as fallen goddess, you will suffer divine retribution okay? Like this incident with the landlord, it might be your punishment for not taking care of me, the goddess. Kazuma, if you feel bad about the way you are treating me, then say ‘sorry, beautiful Aqua-sama’, and offer high class wine to me. Go buy some, quick...”

“Steal.”

Seeing Aqua continuing to hog the couch and hugging her knees, I reached out a hand and said that.

With the sound of coins rustling, Aqua’s purse appeared in my outreach hand.

“... What are you doing, you thief! What you are doing is a crime, if I send you to the station, the delayed court date would be cancelled. Hee-- Kazuma is a criminal--! Are you planning to buy wine with my money? What I meant is for you to use your own money...”

“Steal.”

Before Aqua finished, I used ‘steal’ on her.

In my hand was one of Aqua’s socks.

Aqua continue hugging her knees, moving the toes on her one bare leg intentionally in protest.

“... What are you doing, I will feel cold. Return my sock to me, pervert. If you don’t return it to me, I will tell the police that a pervert was panting excitedly after stealing my sock. If you understand...”

“Steal.”

I don’t know why Aqua was keeping this on her.

After using 'steal', some sort of seed appeared in my hand.

Aqua looked uneasy after seeing this.

"Nah nah, Kazuma. This kind of prank or joke isn't funny, that's not nice. I also went a bit too far, I will reflect on that. How about we both apologize and make up?"

"Steal."

I toss the other sock that appeared in my hand onto the carpet.

I then said to Aqua slowly:

"... I will raise a large sum of money now. Didn't you say your Hagoromo is a holy relic? Let me borrow it, I will sell it for you. If you don't want me to take it by force, go to another room and take it off yourself... But you will probably say no, so I will just strip it away right here."

I wiggled my fingers at Aqua to emphasize this, and she said with a stiff expression:

"What are you talking about? This hagoromo is proof of my godhood, how could you sell it, silly. This kind of joke isn't funny..."

"Steal."

"Ahhhh Kazuma-sama ahhhhh! I was wrong, it's my fault, don't, stop--!"

-- Several minutes later.

"Woo... Sniff... Boohoo... Wahh..."

Aqua was still curled up on the couch like a ball, burying her face between her thighs.

As for her appearance...

-- Aside from her bare feet, it was the same as usual.

"Damn it, why is your luck so strong during a time like this... Or rather, what are you doing with all this junk..."

The junk I stole from Aqua was scattered near my feet.

They looked like party trick items, like seeds, cups, marbles...

The carpet was filled with things you might find by turning out the pocket of a kid.

Because of this girl, I wasted lots of mana.

"Why are you so noisy this early in the morning, what is happening?"

I was still standing before the sniveling Aqua when Megumin came down the stairs in adventuring attire.

"Hick... Kazuma he... to pay back the debts... he says he will sell it... and strip me forcefully..."

"Hey, shut it, don't create misunderstandings with your fragmented manner of speech! Yes, it's my bad, I apologize, and don't look at me like that, Megumin! I only wanted to sell her equipment away!"

Aqua sniveling, Megumin looking at me with disdain, this was a normal morning.

"Bad news, this is bad! Kazuma, bad news!"

Suddenly, a beautiful lady charged in and shattered the peaceful atmosphere.

Her dressing gave a pure impression, the expensive looking dress, white high heels, her head of long braided hair flows down her chest from one shoulder. She looks like a daughter of some noble family.

But her pure dressing couldn't hide her alluring figure.

But this beauty I had never seen before was calling my name even though this was our first meeting.

"... Who are you?"

"Hmmm...? Eh...! Kazuma! Now is not the time to joke around! Can we play this game next time instead!?"

The pure beauty said something out of place with a blushing face, making me realize who she was.

"What, you are Darkness? You made us worry so much, you are finally willing to come back!"

Hearing me said that, Aqua who was sniveling cried out immediately:

"Waahhh! Darkness, Kazuma he--! Kazuma he wants to strip me, and sell my precious thing away...!"

"Hey! Putting it that way can cause misunderstandings easily, so shut it!"

As Aqua and I was squabbling, Megumin told Darkness:

"Welcome back Darkness. You don't need to explain what happened. Here, take a nice long bath to soothe your body and soul."

“...? Bath? What are you saying Megumin? Anyway, I am more interested in the special play Aqua mentioned...”

Darkness who was wearing a dress looked at me and Aqua with longing and anticipation.

“Are you still dreaming? Stop with the dream talk; just rest for today. It’s great that you are back. Listen to me, go take a warm bath and cry your heart out.”

“What are you talking about all this while! Why do I have to cry? And what’s with the bath... What is it, Aqua? Why are you pulling on my skirt?”

Aqua who stopped wailing and was tugging on Darkness’ white dress, confirming the material as she said:

“... This is definitely high quality material. This must be the bonus reward the landlord gave you.”

“Darkness... You worked so hard... In order to save me, it must had been hard on you...”

I told Darkness emotionally.

“Stupid! What are you people misunderstanding! The landlord didn’t do anything weird to me, this dress is mine! Why? You think I didn’t return earlier because I was being abused by the landlord!?”

“What else could it be? We were thinking how terrible they were treating you... But if this wasn’t given to you by the landlord, what is with this expensive dress? You say this belongs to you, is it for noble lady cosplay? Are you researching a type of play?”

"No! This, this is not cosplay! Sorry for making you worry. But that landlord didn't have the guts to request anything rude from me... Forget about that, look at this!"

Darkness then handed an album thin booklet to me.

Instead of an album thin booklet, this was more like a...

"... What is this? Ohh, a handsome guy? How unpleasant."

Looking at the photo of a bright and cheery man, I unconsciously tore...

"Ahhh! Look what you had done to the marriage interview photo! If you tear it like this, how will I reject the match make now!"

Hya!

"Ohh, sorry, I was careless! I don't know why, but my hands moved unconsciously, I couldn't control it... Wait, what matchmaking?"

I tilted my head confused with the photo in my hand.

"That's right! That damn Alexei, using cheap tricks like that! I did promise to do anything, but my father will reject him if it was too offensive. I knew that, that's why I promised him back then, but..."

The panicking Darkness said.

"Wait, slow down and speak clearly. Who is this handsome guy? And forcing you to marry someone you don't like is clearly an unreasonable request right? Also, how is the landlord related to the handsome guy on this photo? Darkness, if you don't want to, why not just ask your father to reject this? I will try to fix this photo. Aqua, could you get some rice for me?"

"Okay--"

Aqua ran off, and in order to calm Darkness who was about to cry, I ushered her to the couch.

“The one on the photo is Alexei’s son. That damn Alexei, he probably knew if he was the one to propose, he will definitely be rejected. But the only good point my father saw in Alexei is his son. How should I put this... The one most enthusiastic about the marriage is my father. But I don’t understand why Alexei wants his son to marry me...”

Darkness said as she sat on the couch and stared at the messy coffee table.

Aqua returned with bits of rice and sat besides Darkness, placing the photo on the table and repairing it.

Aqua used a corner of the table while my designs were for the merchandize to be displayed in Wiz’s shop were scattered on the other parts of the table. Darkness picked one up and asked curiously:

“... This is? The sketching on it is weird. What is this?

Megumin who was putting on her boots near the entrance answered:

“Actually, while Darkness was away, we had been brainstorming about ways to earn more money. These are convenient tools kazuma thought of. He is planning on selling it in Wiz’s shop.”

“Oh? Well, Kazuma has high luck stats. He might be well suited to do business.”

“Speaking about my luck, I am really doubtful about that. If my luck is so great, I should be able to meet comrades that are more useful. I wouldn’t get into debts, get entangled in troubling incident, and live a wonderful life.”

The three of them trembled when they heard me say that.

“I, I am troubled by matchmaking because I spoke up for Kazuma! No, I am not asking you to repay me or anything! We are comrades after all, the most important thing is to help each other! I had troubled you much, so it is only natural for me to help you!”

Darkness explains, but a drop of sweat drip down her cheek.

“I, I have a meeting with Yunyun later! Yes, that’s right! In order to prove Kazuma’s innocence, I am going to think of a plan together with Yunyun...!”

Megumin averted her eyes and said so before the entrance.

So that’s where she was going.

“I will leave clearing Kazuma’s name as a suspect to them and clean the toilet! I don’t think it is dirty, but I am concerned with the toilet! Kitchen and baths, leave places that uses water to me!”

Stopping her work in repairing the photo, the goddess of toilets uses cleaning as an excuse to escape.

-- As everyone was planning on running.

Darkness waved her hands, gesturing them to stay, and showed a sad face to us and said:

“What, what should I do. Actually... I didn’t came back this few days in order to stop the progression of the matchmaking session... I am here because of that too... The matchmaking will be this afternoon. There is no time left. Pardon me, but is there anyone who is willing to return with me to convince my father?”

Part 2

“... In short, Darkness’ father wants her to give up the dangerous job of adventurers, so he sends her to matchmaking sessions whenever he has the chance. But Darkness don’t plan on marrying yet and rejected all previous attempts.”

Megumin who had put on her boots said as she sat near the entrance.

Aqua continued to repair the photo on the table.

I wanted to repair the photo I tore myself, but since Aqua was happy to do so and was doing a great job, I decided to let her be.

This girl was talented in unnecessary things...

“... Yes, you are right. To be frank, I am very satisfied with my current life. If I continue my career, an evil mage or a minion of the demon king army might target me. I will resist til the very end, but still get captured by them in a miserable state. It will be terrible, I will be tied up in locks and chains, my clothes will be all tattered...! Ugh...! Sto... Stahp...!”

“I think you should retire and get married soon.”

Darkness was lost in her own fantasy, squirming about with a blushing face, making me back away from her.

Megumin shook the staff in her hand and said doubtfully:

“I see, the previous match making session was the request of Darkness’ father, so you can reject. But the matchmaking session was raised by the landlord, and you had already promised him to do him one favor.

Darkness’ father is eager, the landlord is also eager, so you can’t reject it under such circumstances. But the landlord wants you by hook or by crook, why is he so obsess with Darkness? I don’t get why he wants you

as a daughter-in-law either. With his status as landlord, if he really wants to , he can force Darkness to be concubine by force.”

Hearing what Megumin said, Darkness lowered her head.

She put her hands together before her chest, rubbed her fingers for a moment and finally said:

“... My, my real name is Dustiness Ford Lalatina. I am... a daughter of a rather esteemed noble clan...”

“Ehhh!” x3

Seeing our surprised expression, Darkness flashed a lonely expression for a moment, and seemed sad.

She must have surprised many people before when she introduced herself.

“Dustiness...! That is not just rather esteemed, it’s a super powerful nobility clan! The top advisor in this nation, that Dustiness? In this town?”

Darkness answered the screaming Megumin softly:



“... Yes.”

Next, Aqua asked:

“What! So if I become a child of the Dustiness family, I can slack around all day and live an extravagant life?”

For Aqua who missed the important point, Darkness replied with a slightly troubled tone:

“Yes... But, our family is not looking to adopt...”

I retorted the most important point at the troubled Darkness.

“Darkness, you...! You are always saying things like ‘yeah’, ‘sure’, acting like a proper knight! But your real name Lalatina is so cute!”

“Don’t, don’t call me Lalatina...!”

Lalatina’s face turned red, and she shouted with tears in the corner of her eyes.

Megumin who stood up because she was too surprised sat down onto the carpet near the entrance and said:

“Well... This might be surprising, but Darkness is Darkness. For me, Darkness is a tough Crusader, an important comrade. That is all.”

When she heard Megumin said that, Darkness said with a happy expression:

“... Yes, please take care of me from now on too...”

She then smiled with relief.

Seeing their interaction, Aqua pointed at herself cheerfully:

“... Nah nah, I have something shocking to tell you okay? Well, I said this before, but you didn’t believe me... Actually, I am a goddess!”

“Wow, that’s great!” x2

“Why don’t you believe me--!”

Aqua grumbled as she started repairing the photo with rice again.

Seeing the three of them like this, I started thinking about something.

I see, a lot of things made sense now.

Like why Darkness knew less about the world than me and why she was wearing cosplay like attire that was so out of place.

The landlord wanted his son to marry Darkness was probably because of political reason.

There were people who wanted to at least live in the same house, even if they couldn’t get the girl themselves.

If I leave this alone, an important member in our party was going to be married off.

Important... member... hmmm?..... Hmmm?

“We have to bring this photo back and convince Darkness’ father. Here, take a look. How is it? Isn’t the repair perfect?”

As I was deep in thought, thinking over something, Aqua handed the photo to me with a cocky face. The photo was as good as new, you couldn’t tell that it was torn before.

... Wait, Aqua was going to be married off?

This meant a crusader who couldn't hit the enemy would have to leave the party because of marriage.

Retirement due to marriage... That's right, a wonderful occasion.

I was not treating her like a useless child and chasing her away.

I didn't hate Darkness.

She has some weird places, but she wasn't a bad person.

But the prospect of our party wasn't good and Darkness was an aristocratic lady, so was it fine tying her down as an adventurer?

--No, it's not good.

If Darkness got married, her parents would feel at ease.

Actually, I was worried about Darkness too.

If on the off chance we made it to the demon king's castle and ran into danger, this girl would definitely yell enthusiastically at us something like 'Don't worry about me, Just leave me here and go'.

After getting captured, she would be overjoyed, saying 'Ugh...! Just kill me...!' or something as she look forward to her mistreatment.

That's right, in other words, this is a great idea that would gift everyone with happiness!

"Sigh... I must come up with a reason and return this photo to the other party. I will then apologize using this excuse and try to convince my father... That's why, I hope someone can accompany me to do this..." Darkness looked at the repaired matchmaking photo in my hand and eased up as she requested us for help. And then...

"That's ittttt---!"

"Ahhhh!" x3

I tore the photo in half.

Part 3

"I have to meet Yunyun, so I'm going now. I have an ominous feeling about what Kazuma is thinking about, will it be fine?... I'm leaving Darkness in your hands, alright?"

Megumin looked at me uneasily a few times, and left the place with a worried expression.

For me, Megumin going out was good.

Among Megumin, Aqua and Darkness, the hardest to handle would probably be Megumin.

"Ughhh... I worked so hard... to repair it..."

Aqua sat on the couch, throwing a tantrum because the photo she fixed was torn up again.

-- As I watched Megumin left, I could feel a strong gaze on my back.

The gaze came from Darkness, she was glaring at me silently with tears in her eyes.

Aqua was also staring at me with tears.

How, how scary.

"Calm, calm down. This is for the best in the future."

Hearing the excuse I made up on the spot, Darkness whose eyes were still teary asked:

“... How?”

I explained in detail to Darkness and Aqua.

Putting it simply, in order for her to continue her career as an adventurer, it would be better to attend a matchmaking session now.

This might be with the landlord's son this time, but even if this one is rejected, Darkness' father will arrange another one in no time.

Will Darkness need to reject them one at a time?

If Darkness' father couldn't take it anymore, he might adopt tougher measures.

If that was the case, Darkness should accept it this one time, and mess up the event utterly. That was my suggestion.

Although I suggest utter destruction, there was no need to go so far as to tarnish Darkness' family name, she just need to force the other party to give up by themselves.

That way, Darkness' parents would be more prudent about arranging the next matchmaking session.

After all, it would be embarrassing for the family if the other party rejects them every time.

And of course, Aqua and I would be accompanying her under the guise of house help.

We will assist Darkness secretly to make the other party dislike her.

And the target this time was the infamous landlord's family after all.

Even though messing up this session to discourage Darkness' father would have negative impact on her family name, it would be less damaging than doing so compared to matchmaking with a fine aristocratic clan.

-- After the two of them heard my explanation...

"That, that's it Kazuma! Let's use this plan! If this works, I won't need to go home and beat down my father every time he arrange a session."

Her, her father was really pitiful...

"I get it, this is a great plan! I thought you will say 'if one of the problem children marries off, you can find a new member and relax, yahoo--!' or something like that!"

Aqua's words made me shiver.

"No, no way! How could I bear letting such an excellent crusader like Darkness leave?... Don't do that, don't look at me with eyes like that, I am half serious about this alright..."

Part 4

Dustiness mansion.

This building situated in the main street of the town had an appearance befitting a grand aristocratic family.

"Is this true? Can we really do this, Lalatina? Are you willing to consider this matchmaking session seriously?"

Lalatina... I mean, Darkness' dad held Darkness hand as he said excitedly.

This is the Darkness' home, situated right in this town, and we are inside the building.

Darkness just told her dad that she was willing to go for the matchmaking session.

"It's true, dear father. Lalatina wants to try it."

When we heard Darkness said that, Aqua and I lowered our head.

"Nah nah, Kazuma-san, Kazuma-san, she said 'dear father'."

"Are, are you stupid, Lalatina is more funny, she called herself 'Lalatina'."

Looking at lady Lalatina talking in a different manner than usual, Aqua and I whispered to each other, our shoulders shaking as we tried to hold back our laughter, earning the glare from the red faced lady.

When Darkness' dad saw us like this, he felt a bit suspicious.

"Lalatina, who are these two guest?"

Hearing him ask this, Darkness extended his hand toward Aqua and I.

"These two are my adventuring companions. For this matchmaking session, I wish to employ them as temporary butler and maid to join me for the event."

Her dad frowned and seemed uneasy about this.

"Erm... about that..."

That won't do.

I took a step forward, put one hand on my chest and stood up straight.

“Pleased to meet you. I am adventurer Satou Kazuma, I have been in the care of lady Lalatina. If the matchmaking is a success, we probably won’t be able to meet lady Lalatina because of our difference in status. I know we are flaunting the rules a little, but for this very last moment, we wish to stay by lady Lalatina’s side, and see for ourselves if we can entrust our important companion to the groom.”

Without any stuttering, I state my piece fluently and bowed.

I am so cool right now.

If I could marry the lady away, I felt I could achieve anything.

Seeing me act so differently, Darkness and Aqua were stunned.

-- The maids brought us to the meeting room.

“Please wait for a moment. We will prepare the attire for our honored guests.”

The maids ushered us to sit at the couch and served us tea. After inviting us to ‘enjoy the tea’, they left the room.

As expected of a meeting room for a grand aristocratic family.

It looked plain at first sight, but it was obvious that it cost a lot of money to maintain the appearance of nobles.

We waited obediently for a while, but got bored easily.

Unable to sit still, we wandered around the meeting room, picking up and observing the decorations.

I don't have an eye for appraising things, but every one of these had to be expensive pieces.

For example, the painting hung on this wall.

At a glance, it looked like a child's scribbling, but it should be those so called modern art pieces.

I rubbed my chin as I looked at the painting, mumbling a little as I act as if I am appreciating this painting.

"Kazuma, you really like that graffiti huh?"

Aqua who didn't knew about art told me when she saw me admiring that art piece.

"Hey, how uncultured. This is what you call modern art, those who understand will know how wonderful it is. It must be a work of a master painter."

Listening to my bullshit, Aqua said on casually from the couch:

"But in the eyes of me who has learned about painting, that is just a normal graffiti."

I shrugged and shook my head at Aqua:

"Well, being able to paint and the ability to appraise are two different matters. Look at this part, it might look like scribbling at first, but if you..."

As I was making up nonsense in my explanation to Aqua, Darkness walked into the meeting room.

"Sorry for the wait, you... Hey Kazuma, that is a painting of my father by me when I was young. Father really like this painting, so he hung it

here to show it off to the guests. Don't stare at it, it makes me feel embarrassed... Hey, what are you doing! Don't pull my hair!"

As Aqua was laughing at me deviously, I tugged on Darkness' plaited hair. At this moment, the maid entered the room carrying clothes for a butler and a maid.

"Kazuma-san, this is the attire for a butler. The size should be just right, please try it on."

I received the clothes from the maid and followed her into the dressing room next door.

... Yeah, it fits perfectly.

"It looks good."

Hearing me said that, the maid bowed and retreated to a corner of the room.

-- I succeeded in getting Darkness' dad to hire me as a temporary butler and returned to Darkness after putting the attire of a butler.

Aqua who was already in maid attire was there.

Unexpectedly, the pure dressing of a maid suits her well.

"Aqua, you look nice in it. Right now, you look like a top class minion."

"You too Kazuma, you look just like a try hard apprentice butler, great. It's like you will be bullied by mean senpais and will cry by yourself in a corner, really great."

"Ara, what an interesting way of putting it. If we were not in the mansion of a grand noble right now, I would have given you a piece of my mind... Well then, are you ready, lady Lalatina?"

“Don’t, don’t call me lady Lalatina! Just addressing me as ‘my lady’ will do if others are around!”

Darkness barked at me flusteredly.

The meeting will be held in this mansion.

And Darkness’ dad asked for my help.

He actually asked me.

He asked for my assistance to stop his daughter from doing anything rude during the meeting.

Not just that.

He was also willing to pay me for my efforts if the meeting goes smoothly.

Not only did our interest coincide, he even threw in gratuity rewards as a bonus.

It would be hard for me not to be fired up.

If the son of the landlord was incapable, I would join in the disruption of the meeting. But if he was just a bit annoying, I would still close an eye on that matter.

“The two of you, this way. Listen carefully! You know what to do right? I’m counting on you!”

Darkness had an uneasy expression as she led us to the entrance to receive the other party of the matchmaking session.

With maids from the Dustiness house flanked her on either side, Darkness looked the part of a lady from a noble house.

On the way to the entrance, Aqua used her sharp eyes and searched for valuable exhibits.

“Oh, that one looks rather...”

Aqua looked at an urn with a handle as if she was looking at something special.

Be it the value of this urn or the worthlessness of the graffiti from earlier, this girl had great artistic sense.

I was curious about the urn Aqua was looking at and lift it up.

It was heavy.

“Is this expensive? How much is this worth?”

“Hey... Don’t touch the things over here, that is my father’s expensive urn...”

Darkness reached out for the handles of the urn I had picked up.

“According to my brilliant appraisal, this urn is...”

Phuck!

“Ah!” x2

With a clear crack, along with our shout, only the handle remained in Darkness’ hands.

“... This urn is now a piece of trash.”

“What, what should we do! This is my father’s precious collection, what should we do!”

Darkness started to panic with the broken handle in her hands.

“Calm, calm down! Your dad is not here right now! There are two solutions! First is to admit it when the matchmaking people are here. That way, your father won’t become angry before the guest! Number two! Use rice or something to make emergency repairs, and place the urn in a position that will easily fall if your dad picks it up!”

“I, I got it, we will do that! As expected of Kazuma, how quick-witted! Even if I admit it before the guests, he will still lecture me after they leave! We will do temporary repairs, put it in a position that will fall easily, and instruct the househelp not to touch it, that’s the best way!”

When she heard my conversation with Darkness, the Dustiness maid said:

“... Excuse me, honored guest... Please don’t teach our young lady such things...”

Part 5

-- The servants formed a row before the entrance with Darkness and her dad right in the middle.

Aqua and me stayed on either side of Darkness.

I suddenly noticed that I had not seen Darkness’ mom. But now is not the time for that.

The other party will be arriving soon.

“But... To think that you will agree to this matchmaking, I am really happy... when Alexei said he had something to discuss with me, I was

thinking what it was about. He was confident you wouldn't reject too. Leaving Alexei aside, his son is a good man. You will have a wonderful life with him, Lalatina."

Darkness' dad said to her happily.

But Darkness replied:

"How mean, dear father. Lalatina only said she will seriously consider about the marriage, fufufu... After thinking it through, I think it is still too early for me to marry. It's too late now. I agreed to the matchmaking session, but I didn't say I want to marry! I will mess up this meeting. I will utterly destroy the matchmaking meeting! Hmm hahahaha!"

Darkness felt there was no need to act anymore and revealed her true nature!

Her dad turned pale as he realized our true intent...

"Could, could it be the reason the two of them are here is to...!"

Her dad looked at us in fear.

Oh no, Darkness was so excited she forgot about keeping her family name untarnished.

At this late juncture, she probably didn't care anymore.

If that was so, I had no need to continue acting.

"... My lady, your choice of words are too crude, please don't speak in such a way."

When they heard me said that, Darkness and her dad looked at us in surprise.

Aqua seemed to like her maid attire a lot, swaying her skirt around happily as she ignored the tense atmosphere.

After understanding my true intent, Darkness' expression turned sour. Her father blinked away tears of joy, looking at me as if I was the messiah.

"Kazuma, you, you...! What is this, are you planning to betray me?"

"There is no betrayal to speak of, my lady. Right now, I am Dustiness' butler, and my greatest wish is for my lady to achieve happiness."

Her father sighed in relief and replied:

"You, you are Kazuma right? Even if this matchmake fails... at least, don't let Lalatina do anything disgraceful before the other party! I will reward you well! So, so...!"

Before her father could even finished, I bowed deeply.

"Please leave it to me, old master. I will aid my lady with all I can..."

-- At this moment.

The door of the mansion opened with a crack, and the man I saw in the photo appeared at the door.

He had an entourage with him.

Darkness was bent on making the first move, crossing her arms, glaring at the other party as she said loudly!

"You are the brat who is meeting with me right? I'm Dustiness Ford Lalatina! You can call me Queen Dustiness..."

“Ara, watch out my lady! There’s a bug on the back of your head!”

I hit the back of Darkness’ head hard!

Part 6

After I stopped Darkness from making a scene.

We excused ourselves saying that we want to check if the bug stung the lady and moved to the room next door. Darkness’ father accompanied the guest to buy time.

“Hey, what are you thinking! Aren’t you here to help me?”

Darkness grabbed my back collar and dragged me to the corridor.

Aqua who still didn’t understand what was happening followed beside Darkness. She seemed to like stroking Darkness’ plaited hair, toying with it in her hand.

-- Right now, Darkness was interrogating me.

“Anyway, calm down my lady. You had forgotten about something important.

“Don’t call me lady when it’s just the three of us!... What is that important thing?”

Darkness regained her composure, her attitude had softened enough to listen to me.

“You forgot the part about not tarnishing your family’s reputation. If you make too big a mess, you will be the one who will be hurt the most.”

Darkness frowned when she heard me said that.

“How would I be hurt? If the negative news spread, I won’t be able to marry and can continue my adventuring career without worries! The worse case would be my father disowning me, I am already prepared for that... After being disowned, I will feel uneasy about my uncertain future... Despite that, I still did my best to survive and took on jobs too hard for me. In the end, my body won’t be able to take it and I will get captured by the minions of the demon king army, and be ravaged...! I want to live a life like that.”

“So you finally admit it.”

After expressing her wish that was incredible in some ways, the young lady continued:

“And that guy is not my type. The guys my father wants to set me up with are all bad.”

I was confused when she said that.

But that guy was a handsome guy.

“Is that guy as bad as you say? According to your father’s description, he sounds like an okay guy. But I only know what he looks like though.”

Darkness replied to my question:

“That guy is Alexei Barnes Walther. He is talented and looked nothing like the landlord. The citizens give rave reviews about him, he is a cheerful man.”

Aqua gave her comments too:

“Speaking of Walther from the Alexei family, everyone in the town of Axel has nothing but praise for him. He distribute items to help the poor, I had received it a few times too.”

You, you...

Hearing Aqua say that, Darkness said unhappily:

"That's not good! My father doing that is enough! How can a noble who wants to marry me do such a thing!"

"Is, is that so? Ah, could it be that he does charity on the surface, but does evil deeds in the dark? If that is so, I will feel bad even if I didn't know about this..."

He was that landlord's son after all, I was too rash. As I was feeling a bit remorseful, Darkness said:

"There's no such thing! First of all, I heard that guy has excellent character. He won't get angry with anyone, and won't lecture his staff when they make mistakes. He will think together with them why such errors occurs, a weird person..."

...? That sounds like a great guy.

"And he is very hardworking, studying everyday in order to help the people with his knowledge. He is smart and great in swordsmanship, the youngest knight ever in history. I have never heard anything negative about him, a real perfect man. He also advises his father often, pleading him to change the harsh policies."

.....

"Nah, from what I am hearing, isn't he the perfect man? Which part are you unhappy about, Darkness?"

Aqua asked confusedly.

"Which part am I unhappy about? Everything! First, nobles should have the behaviour of a noble, and wear a sinister smile at all time! When we

met just now, what is with his clear and forthcoming eyes? It should be more like... like Kazuma's lecherous gaze when I walked around with loose clothes in the mansion, eyes that want to rape every inch of my body!"

"No, no, no, I don't! I, I, I am not looking at you with such eyes!"

As I was hiding my guilty conscience, Darkness continued:

"He doesn't get mad when his staff screws up? Is he an idiot? If a maid make a mistake, then he should do this and that to her using that excuse, that's the proper way for a noble! That man doesn't know anything, his staff make mistakes because they want to be scolded! As a noble, he should have the guts to make all the maids pregnant!"

"You are the only one that thinks so."

But Darkness ignored my retort and clenched her fist as if she couldn't endure it anymore, and said passionately:

"Simply put, the type I like is the total opposite of that man who will achieve great things even if I leave him alone! He must not be too eye catching, either too fat or too skinny will do. It would be best if he loves me but has a weak will, lusting after other girls if they are a bit kind to him. A mandatory criteria will be having a lecherous look and is horny all year round. If he looks down on the hardship of life and just want to live his life easily like a trash will be great. If he has debts, that's even better! He also has to drink all day and refuse to work, always grumbling that 'this is the fault of society'. He will then hit me with empty beer bottles and tell me: 'Hey Darkness, use your slutty body to earn back some cash!'... Hmmm...!"

After speaking her mind, our lady Depravetina blushed and trembled.

Damn, this woman was beyond redemption.

In this uneasy atmosphere, Aqua and I stood in place silently.

“... Enough! I will destroy this meeting myself! Kazuma, be prepared for the consequences if you get in my way!”

After saying that, Darkness walked out of the room angrily.

Aqua and I remained silent for a while.

Finally, Aqua said to me accusingly:

“...Kazuma, what are you planning?”

I said to Aqua:

“You saw her dad’s face too right, he is really worried about his daughter’s future. You heard how the other party’s reputation was right? This is not a political marriage, but a father who wish for the happiness of his daughter, a carefully planned meeting.”

“What then? Even if it was Darkness’ father, he has no right to decide her life...”

Aqua said strongly.

But I didn’t let her finish.

“Darkness is a noble. Isn’t it normal for her not to be able to decide her own marriage? For aristocrats, they live a life of luxury and receive elite education... it’s hard to tell from how Darkness looks though. Since they depend on the taxes of the commoners for a living, it’s normal for their life to have less freedom. Living a luxurious life from birth and wanting the freedom to decide their own life, that is just being willful... She already had it good living such a carefree life all this while. And the one she is marrying is a perfect man. If you still want to be picky about it, it

will incur the wrath of the people.”

After hearing my long speech, Aqua seemed unconvinced.

“... But! That is still too much!”

“That’s not all.”

Aqua stopped when I said that.

“... Eh?”

I gestured for Aqua to squat down.

I then asked her with a very serious expression:

“Aqua. Our objective is to defeat the demon king and return home. But what are Darkness’ wishes?”

Aqua squatted down like me, she didn’t think I will ask her this so seriously, confusing her.

“Well, erm... To not marry and continue adventuring with us...”

Aqua gave a harmless answer which made me shout:

“Wrong! I don’t want to listen to such pleasantries! You know the truth! Hurry! Don’t be shy, say it, say it out loud! I want you to say it! Let me see what expression you will make when saying it!”

“To, to be kidnapped by a strong monster she couldn’t win, and let the enemy do erotic things to her!... Ka, Kazuma, that is sexual harassment right? Nah, is this sexual harassment?”

I continued saying to Aqua who was on the verge of tears:

"This is not sexual harassment! Listen well, if you are a moron, that girl is a super moron beyond redemption! Her dream is to be kidnapped by monsters and have perverted things done to her? Stupid! Go, tell her dad about this! If you can, then do it! Tell him his daughter has a grand dream, so he has to forget about marrying her off and let her realize her ambition. Explain to her dad right now!"

"I am sorry! I can't say it! Sorry!"

Aqua who apologized in a panic said timidly:

"But... But are you certain the right choice is for her to marry that person? Darkness should have her own preference for type of men."

"Are you are saying something stupid like the other party is pitiful because he is not her type? Darkness said what type of men she likes, you heard it too. If Darkness found her ideal partner and he is exactly as she described, what are you going to do about it? Listen, just force her onto that Walther character... He is a good guy after all, so we can trouble him a little. Darkness can be rash at times, so we should let that guy tie her down and watch over her. From what I just heard, Walther is different from his father, and is a warm and gentle person. If that is so, he might agree to Darkness going out for adventures occasionally. We can then accompany her and do quest from time to time. Her dad would be at ease, and I can relax, Darkness won't partake in quest that is too dangerous; more importantly, I can get rid of one of the three problem children."

"The three problem children you just mentioned, are you referring to me?"

I lift my fist and stood up.

"In the end, Adventuring is not a career you can pursue forever! This job that borders on the edge of darkness, if I can quit then I should quit! Or rather, I am ready to quit anytime! Let's make it clear, that girl is an

idiot! I will support her if she wants to continue being an adventurer, but I must emphasise that she is an idiot! Others shouldn't interfere in her family matters, but my goal is for Darkness to marry off successfully! If that don't work, I aim to at least protect the reputation of the Dustiness clan, so she can marry and retire at any time!"

"Wait Kazuma! Answer my question!"

Part 7

"Pardon me for the long wait."

"We are back."

When Aqua and I returned to the entrance, Darkness and her dad was still chatting happily with Walther. Darkness was glancing uneasily at us who was standing beside her.

"I know how Kazuma feels about this. I also wish for Darkness to marry someone she likes, but after hearing what you said, I think it would be terrible if that happens."

"I'm glad you understand. Listen, you just act by your own judgement. Try to help from the side so Darkness can leave a great impression on the other party, okay?"

I am not sure if Darkness heard what we said, she lowered her voice and whispered into my ear:

"... Hey, for your own good, give it up. If not, you will experience something so bad that you will wish you were dead."

What is she talking about, that is too scary.

But threats won't work on me now.

Because I have the backing of someone more powerful than Darkness.

That's right...

"Pardon my interruption, old master. Can we start the meeting between the young lady and master Walther? The young lady has been looking impatient for a while now."

Hearing me say that, Darkness ground her teeth in protest for my proposal.

Her dad didn't notice Darkness' reaction, accepting my suggestion readily.

Darkness' dad didn't seem to mind me whacking the back of Darkness' head in order to shut her up.

He seemed to think I did a good job and sighed in relief.

This mean I have the approval of her dad, and won't get lectured if I go a bit too far.

"Well then, Mr Walther, this way please. Lalatina, come with us too. Let's go to the meeting room."

Darkness squatted down when she heard her father say that.

"My heels seemed to have broke... Mr Walther, can you lend me a hand?"

Darkness reached out to Walther as she said that.

She probably want to avoid me hitting her head as Darkness spoke in a normal lady like manner.

But this is strange, she must be up to something.

I reached out immediately.

“Young lady, allow me. No matter how much you admire master Walther, you aren’t engaged yet, so you can’t trouble him like this. My apologies master Walther, the young lady is really happy ahhh Owww owww owww it’s breaking breaking please don’t joke with me, wait, stop, please stop, I’m telling you to knock it off young lady!”

I blinked away the tears after I shook off the hand that was crushed by Darkness with her full strength.

This, this girl, if I didn’t stop her, she would have done that to Walther!

“What’s wrong? Are you okay?”

Seeing me squatted down while favoring my right hand painfully, Walther was worried and asked.

What a great guy. Please, just marry and take this mad dog with you okay?

“Fufufu, it’s nothing. Let us be off, Mr Walther.”

Darkness moved briskly away, I could only see her off while squatting down, waiting for Aqua to heal me with magic.

When her father saw us, he put his hand together and lowered his head in apology, he felt bad about this.

“-- Well then, let me introduce myself properly once more. I am Alexei Barnes Walther, son of the Alexei family, my job is to assist my father in managing the territory.”

Darkness and Walther sat facing each other with the white coffee table of the guest room between them.

Walther was a cool and stylish man.

He was one head taller than me.

He probably trained regularly, his solid muscles were visible through his clothes, and he was adequately lean.

Walther smiled gently as he looked at Darkness.

Aqua and I were beside Darkness, a little bit too close to her.

Walther seemed bothered by us, but since Darkness' dad didn't say anything, he didn't say anything about it.

"I am Dustiness Ford Lalatina. I don't think I need to introduce my family. Even the son of some upstart landlord should know ahhhhh!"

Darkness who was speaking ill right from the get go trembled with her face red.

"Are, are you okay?"

Walther asked with concern, but Darkness continued:

"I, I'm fine... It's just that seeing Mr Walther's face is making me uncomfortable nnnnnhhhh---!"

Before finishing, Darkness lowered her head to the table with her ears red.

"Young lady Darkness' tummy had been acting up since morning. Isn't that right, Darkness?! Don't push yourself if your stomach hurts."

“Huh? No, I’m not...!”



Darkness denied as Aqua tried to make an excuse for her.

Leaving Aqua who was making matters worse aside, I said:

“The young lady was eager to meet Mr Walther since early morning, she was a little too excited. As you can see, the young lady is so shy that her face is all red.”

“Er, well, her face is really red... it’s a little embarrassing...”

I stepped harder with my foot, and whispered in a volume only Darkness could hear.

-- I twisted my foot that was stepping on Darkness under the table.

“... Hey, young lady, I will step harder if you say any more nonsense.”

I wasn’t sure she heard what I said, but Darkness’ face became red and she started panting as she said softly:

“... What, what a wonderful reward...”

Our young lady was acting as usual.

When he saw the way his daughter was acting, Darkness’ dad seemed to understand what the situation was like under the table.

Since he could grasp the situation, that meant he knew about his daughter’s fetish.

I wanted to scream at him for letting her daughter go astray, but there’s no time for that now.

To cover for me and Darkness, her dad brought up a topic to chat with Walther.

“Mr Walther, I heard your mansion was destroyed not long ago. Where are you living right now? How about bunking in my place? Of course, you have to sleep in a different room from my daughter.”

Darkness' father said half jokingly, and Walther answered with a smile:

“Hahaha! No, if I am to live under the same roof with the beautiful lady Lalatina, it would take tremendous self restraint to stop myself...”

And so, as Darkness was trembling with her face blushed, the two of them conversed idly...

Part 8

-- After saying 'an old man staying around would only be a hindrance', Darkness' dad took his leave.

As he was leaving, he whispered in my ear 'I'm counting on you.'.

Right now, Darkness and Walther was strolling in the Dustiness family courtyard with Aqua and I in tow... And it was grand, as expected of a famous aristocratic clan.

The vast courtyard had a pond, and colourful flowers were blooming despite it being winter. These were probably high quality breeds.

Aqua whistled and clapped when she saw the fishes in the pond.

I was curious about what she was doing and looked, and saw the school of fishes gathering towards Aqua...

... That is amazing, I will get her to teach me later.

“Lady Lalatina, what are your hobbies?”

As I was focused on the pond, Walther asked something that was obligatory and harmless during matchmaking.

“I hunt Goblins when I am free.... Ughh!”

When Darkness said something thoughtless, I elbowed her waist from the side.

Walther smiled wryly, tilting his head as he asked me who was unnaturally close to Darkness:

“... The two of you seemed to be really close.”

My face turned pale and I thought that this was it.

Oh no, I overdid it, I became a factor that dragged Darkness’ image down.

It must feel awkward to see the butler and the lady so close together during a matchmaking session.

As I was thinking about how to tide this over, Darkness who noticed this smiled at me deviously.

What is this girl scheming...?

“I am very close to this butler Kazuma, we spend everyday together. Be it meals or bathing, even sleeping at night is.... is..... Ugh.....”

Darkness who said something foolish on impulse couldn’t continue and blushed.

Really, what was with your standard for embarrassment?

“The young lady loves to joke. That’s the way she is, a cute girl who get embarrassed by the thing she herself was saying. Right, young lady

Lalatina. What's the matter, young lady Lalatina? Your face is getting red, young lady Lalatina."

"Ugh... You, I will get you for this..."

Hearing me repeating the cute name Lalatina, Darkness ground her teeth with tears in her eyes.

Good, she won't act up for a while.

Seeing our interaction, Walther had a slightly lonely smile:

"... You are close to each other... it is making me envious."

"Please don't joke with us, Mr Walther. This is just a mistress and her butler playing around a little..."

Darkness suddenly stepped away from me when she heard me say that.

Ohh?

"I don't want to beat around the bush anymore! I can't take this!"

I don't know what she was thinking when Darkness tore the skirt of her dress.

Her white thigh was visible from the torn portion, showing Darkness alluring body in plain sight.

Perv-ness tore her skirt to an easy to move length, she then tore a line up the side of her skirt.

Walther couldn't help averting his eyes as Darkness shouted at him:

“Hey, you are called Walther right? Since you are a knight, you should know how to use a sword! My job is a crusader, let’s go to the dojo, I will appraise your capability there. Come, follow me!”

Darkness acted impulsively all of a sudden and I couldn’t stop her.

“... Walther, take a good look at that man. As a noble, you should learn that lecherous eyes from Kazuma, and use it everyday!”

I I I, I didn’t look!

I only glance over a little because of curiosity!

Part 9

“We fight until one party surrenders. Just try to make me say ‘I can’t fight anymore’, or ‘please stop hitting me’! If you can do that, I can marry you or follow you anywhere!”

Darkness brought us to the dojo.

In the center of the dojo, Darkness tossed a wooden sword to Walther.

Walther caught the wooden sword and swung it with a troubled face, saying:

“Erm... Lady Lalatina, I am a knight. Even if this is just training, I can’t point a sword at a lady...”

Hearing Walther say that, Darkness frowned and said unhappily:

“What a gutless fellow. Kazuma that is standing right there claims to be gender equality advocate, he even announced that he would not hesitate drop kicking woman. You should learn from him.”

Walther looked at me when Darkness said that. His gaze felt painful.

Next, Walther seemed to have made up his mind, and said with a sigh:

“... I understand. To be honest, my father forced me to come, and I am here to reject the marriage... But after seeing you, I changed my mind. You are different from the other daughters of nobility, as expected of the only daughter of the national chief advisor. You seemed to have a bold personality, but get embarrassed by your own words, that’s really cute. Your way of speaking is straightforward, and is not haughty towards the butler serving you, treating him as an equal. I am very interested in you... I’m coming, lady Lalatina!”

After the sudden confession, he slashed at Darkness!

The quick slash disarmed Darkness’ wooden sword and hit her shoulder.

Seeing that the attack was a success, Walther sighed in relief, thinking that victory was a sure thing.

But Darkness picked up her wooden sword and said nonchalantly:

“Very good, next. Come at me bro.”

-- After more than thirty minutes.

“Enough! The match is obviously over! Why aren’t you giving up!”

Despite Walther having the advantage, it sounded as if he was forced into a corner.

In terms of capability, Walther was dominating.

Since the start, Darkness’ wooden sword couldn’t touch Walther. Darkness was hit multiple times and was bruised all over.

But other than being out of breathe, Darkness was fine and her eyes were full of life.

Her fiery red cheeks covered in sweat, Darkness yelled:

“What’s the matter? Don’t be shy, attack with everything you have got! Show me your determination to persevere to the end!”

Seeing Darkness act this way, Walther tossed his wooden sword away.

He then raised both his arms in surrender.

“... I give up, lady Lalatina. It’s my loss. Even if my skills are better than you, I am not as strong as you mentally... I can’t attack you anymore. You... are a strong person.”

Walther looked at Darkness with a dazed look and smiled.

Darkness seemed unsatisfied and shrugged.

“... That’s it? Boring. Come back after you train more.”

Hearing Darkness said that, Walther laughed out loud.

He was laughing happily with no regrets

Walther then said in a volume Darkness couldn’t hear...

“... I have really, fallen for you...”

He mumbled.

-- On the surface, it was a beautiful story of Darkness winning over Walther with her determination.

But I knew how Darkness really was, so I couldn’t feel good about this...

In Walther's point of view, Darkness panting and red cheeks look like a crusader enduring incredible pain.

Darkness was still out of breathe as Aqua came to her side to heal her wounds.

I sighed deeply, but Darkness picked up the wooden sword Walther tossed aside...

"Come, Kazuma. Show Walther your merciless and despicable side, let him learn."

After saying some dumb stuff, she gave the wooden swords to me who was sitting at a corner of the dojo.

... What is this girl saying.

No, she just had a fight with Walther, she was probably still feeling the adrenaline rush.

What a joke, I don't want to deal with her.

"... I want to see it too. How the one lady Lalatina trust so much fight."

Walther added unnecessarily.

Aqua who had healed Darkness grunted 'Oh?', and was very interested in the turn of event.

... What's with this?

"Sigh... never mind, I get it. The matchmaking is a failure anyway. And you probably won't spread disparaging rumours about the young lady anyway."

I stopped my act before Walther, spoke like I usually do and stood up.

“Great, that’s the spirit Kazuma! I had always wanted to spar with you! A despicable man who dare steal the underwear of a girl you just met! Unscrupulous, using all sort of dirty tricks! Come at me, don’t hold anything back!”

After hearing what Darkness said, the gaze from Walther felt even more painful.

I had no intention of fighting this excited moron in such cold weather.

-- I reached my empty hand out...

“Create water!”

And poured water on top of Darkness’ head.

“Eh?”

Walther sounded surprised, and I asked in confusion:

“?... What’s wrong?”

Walther answered in a panic:

“... It’s, it’s nothing, just that a match with wooden swords usually won’t allow magic...”

Huh? I see.

Anyway...

When Aqua saw Darkness’ appearance, she said:

“... How strong-- as expected of Kazuma-san who is the best in sexual harassment, he is good--”

Prompted by her, I looked towards Darkness. Her underwear was visible through her soaked clothes, couple that with her torn dress, this is really... candy for the eye.

As for Walther, he couldn't look at Darkness anymore. He lowered his head, not daring to lift it up.

“Fu, fufu... Observe, Walther! In a spar with wooden swords, he will suddenly humiliate me with such tricks. Witness how this man really is!”

The soaked Darkness said something that might cause misunderstanding.

“I, I didn't mean to do that...! Ah-- I don't care anymore!”

She want me to not hold back? Then I will do everything I can.

I already used magic, doing it again should be fine!

“Freeze!”

“Ugh...!”

I cast freezing magic, making the soaked Darkness turn pale and hug her shoulder.

“De, demon...! Deep in the winter, you not only use soak her with water, you freeze her with magic too...?!”

“That's normal-- The people in town call him scumzuma or trashzuma for a reason.”

Shut up, audience!

“Fu, fuhahaha! This merciless style! This, this is...!”

Before she finished, Darkness slashed at me!

Part 10

This was bad. It would be bad if this dragged on.

Facing me who was looking anxious, Darkness seemed to be mocking me as she lift her sword up high.

Her attacks were powerful, but she was either facing the wrong way or misjudge the distance. She could only attack in a straight line, so it was easy to dodge.

“What’s the matter Kazuma. Your breathing is getting ragged!”

Darkness was shivering from the cold in the beginning, but now, her skin was turning red as she sweated and laugh happily.

I already struck Darkness several times, but she didn’t even make a sound.

“Darkness, that’s it! The skinny Kazuma don’t have any stamina, he is not suited for a dragged out battle!”

Damn it, that audience is noisy!

“Fufu, your movements are getting dull! Well then, it’s about time to decide the match!”

After hearing what Aqua said, Darkness smiled arrogantly, throwing her useless sword away and pounced on me.

This is bad, I will lose in a match of pure strength!

“Alright Darkness! Grab him, strangle him! The weak Kazuma will never beat you in a wrestling match!”

Shit, why was she cheering Darkness on! I will strangle that girl after this was over!

As I was building a grudge against Aqua, Darkness spread out her arms and ran towards me in an attempt to bear hug me.

I threw my sword away to, holding my hands up, taking a stance to take Darkness head on.

“You think you can win me in strength? You are underestimating me!”

Darkness shout as she happily grabbed my hands.

“I don’t know what you are planning, but the difference in strength between a crusader like me and an adventurer like you is
ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

Darkness who was grabbing my hand calmly suddenly screamed.

She wanted to pull her hands back, but I held on tightly and said:

“What’s the matter? Aren’t you really confident? Hey Darkness, say something! Wahaha, there’s no way I will fight you head on, you don’t understand after partying with me for aaahhhhhhhhhhh!”

I thought my victory was ascertained when I screamed due to my hand being squeezed.

Darkness who was squeezing my hands laughed in a shrill voice.

“Fu, fufufu... This, this is ‘Drain touch’ right...! But, before you drain me of my strength, I will break your hand first!”

“Kukukuku... You can try if you can ahhhhhh! Hurttttttts!”

I absorbed the stamina of Darkness with ‘Drain touch’, while she planned to overpower me with brute force.

Neither of us were giving in.

Darkness overwhelmed me with her strength bit by bit, but she had a pained expression at the same time.

Damn it, I was siphoning her stamina with ‘Drain touch’, but her vitality seemed endless...!

“Ugh, hey Darkness! Let’s make a bet! You wanted to fight me because I did a lot of things that pissed you off. Let’s make a deal, the winner can ask the loser to do anything...”

I gritted my teeth to endure the pain while Darkness leaned her entire weight over as she said:

“You, you want to make a bet...? Fu, fufu, stalling for time... ? You are on, if I win, you will have to prostrate...!”

-- A chance!

“Deal...! No, no take backs...!”

“Yeah, of course...! You are done! Surrender! Or your hand will really...!”

I was being suppressed bit by bit, but I still said with a confident expression:

"I'm serious! Don't regret this! Promise! After I win, I won't back down even if you come crying to me!"

Despite being in a disadvantage, I smiled arrogantly at Darkness.

She must be confused and lessen her strength.

"...? What, what are you planning to do if I lose?"

"I will make you go red from ear to ear, something that will make you cry and beg...! Hehehe, it's a bet! Let's decide the match! I can already see you begging for forgiveness after my victory...! You just wait for your fate of screaming for my mercy!"

Darkness shivered when she heard that.

Her power turned weak.

"Ugh...! Wha, what are you scheming...! Tell me! Hurry!"

"Fuhehehe, it is something you can't imagine, something even more overboard...!"

"Wha...! Stop....! Ugh...! Even, even if I resist, my strength is being sapped...! Why is this happening, if this goes on...!"

'Drain touch' should only be absorbing vitality, but Darkness' power grew weaker and she dropped onto one knee.

"Hah... hah...! You, what do you want to do to me...! Hah, hah...! Ahhh... I will lose if this goes on...!"

The breathing of the blushing Darkness became heavy as sweat dripped from the back of her neck down her collarbone.

“I will keep sucking your stamina until you faint! Look forward to your miserable sight when you wake up!”

“Ahhh! You...! Ugh... I might lose this fight, but no matter what humiliation I suffer, my heart will not give in...! And... what is that terrible thing you are planning...?”

THE
OVER-
BOARD
DEMAND

YOU
SHOULD
KNOW
WHAT IS
COMING
NEXT.

NOW,

HEHE
HEHE...

I AM JUST
LETTING
YOU
TORMENT
MY BODY
FOR THIS
ONE DAY,

MY
HEART
WILL
NOT
GIVE IN!

WHO
SAID
THAT

IT WILL
JUST BE
FOR ONE
DAY...?

NOW,

CALL ME
MASTER!

WELL
THEN,
MY
DEAR
LADY

YOU
WILL BE
MY PET
FROM
NOW
ON!

MASTER
AHHHHH!!!

MA...

Darkness was still grabbing my hand as she knelt onto the ground of the dojo, her face red with expectation, her strength draining away.

Walther shouted in surprise:

“Bringing up a bet on the verge of victory, how merciless...! The name Trashzuma is really adequate...!”

“That’s, that’s rude!”

Seeing Darkness collapse, Aqua rushed in to take care of her.

-- At this moment.

“I heard you are in the Dojo, so I brought some beverages...”

Darkness’ dad appeared at just the right time.

And the basket full of beverages fell hard onto the ground.

As I was thinking what was happening, the househelp behind him was also dumbstruck.

I followed their gaze and...

They were looking at Darkness who was bruised all over with her dress torn. She was wet, making lots of places visible. Darkness who was in a pitiful state was being treated by Aqua.

... Walther and I looked at each other.

And Aqua pointed at the both of us and said:

“... They did this.”

“Alright, drag them out and off with their heads.”

“No, this is a misunderstanding!” x2

Walther and I shouted at the same time.

Part 11

After Walther and I explain with all our might, we managed to make things clear and got over this mess.

But as a result, Aqua and my real identity was discovered by Walther.

But Walther seemed to have noticed that I am not a butler from the very beginning.

Darkness who was the culprit for our crisis was still sleeping because of my skill.

After being brought to the meeting room, we stayed beside the slumbering Darkness. The maid helped her change into the usual casual clothes she wore for adventuring, which was a tight black skirt and shirt.

Finally, Darkness' dad spoke with his eyes on his daughter:

“My girl isn't good with people... even with people who are close with her. Kazuma, you are in the same party with my daughter right? She refrains from talking about herself right?”

Hearing him say that, I tilted my head and thought.

-- It's hard to say.

I don't really remember, but now that he mentioned it, I don't really know much about Darkness.

Or rather, she don't really like to talk, and she don't say anything good when she does.

"Even as a crusader, my girl is always alone... She goes to the church of Eris everyday, praying to goddess Eris, wishing for comrades she could adventure with. One day, my girl came back from the church and told me she met her first comrade and made a friend. She was so happy as she told me about her female thief friend..."

... Oh, as expected of a real goddess. The work performance of Goddess Eris was great.

"As for our family, my wife passed away when Darkness was young... I didn't remarry after that, raising her as a single father. I was always doting on her, and always bore her freedom in mind... I probably spoilt her that way..."

Darkness' dad said in remorse.

He was probably referring to Darkness' fetish.

Because she had too much freedom growing up, that's why she craved to be tied down?

No, I think that's just her nature, Darkness' dad.

"I think Lalatina is a charming girl and at the same time is as capable as any man. If not for Kazuma, I would definitely want to take her as my wife."

Walther said something incredible out of the blue.

What is this guy saying all of a sudden.

Darkness is just my comrade.

She seemed alluring to me at times, but that is a separate issue.

I won't stand by if someone like the landlord were to ravage her, but if a good man was willing to cherish her, I will definitely gift them with my blessing. That's how our relationship was.

"... I'm sorry, I don't really get what you are saying."

Hearing me said that, Walther adopt a 'I know everything, don't need to hide' attitude and said:

"It's fine, you can make lady Lalatina happier than I can. I can see how deep your trust for each other is, your feeling for each other must be the real thing, right?"

"Alright, get your ass over here. I don't care if you are the landlord's son, I need to give you a good beating."

"Stop, Kazuma-san! Or do it somewhere I can't see! Or I will get arrested too!"

Aqua restrained me from behind, while I struggled against her, trying to use 'Drain touch' on Walther.

"Keke, hahaha!"

Darkness' dad suddenly laughed out loud.

What now? So many things happened today, I am reaching my limit.

Please don't give me any more trouble okay?

“Yes, I understand! Mr Walther, if no one wants to marry my girl, will you please take good care of her then?”

Facing the sudden question from Darkness’ dad, Walther said with a troubled face:

“Well... I am fine with this, but...”

Walther seemed to have something to say to me, but Darkness’ dad cut him off and continued:

“Also, Kazuma.”

“Eh? Me? Yes, anything I can do for you?”

The sudden change in topic confused me.

“Please take good care of my girl. Please watch over her, and don’t let her do anything foolish. I am counting on you.”

What was this old man talking about?

He meant as an adventurer, right?

It would be fine then, that was what I had been doing anyway.

“... Hmmm? Ugh...? Meeting room?... Ahhh... right...”

Darkness regain conscious.

She seemed to recall what happened before she blacked out and said:

“... Ugh, is it over already? After losing conscious, what filthy things had been done to me...!”

“Nothing, I didn’t do anything! Don’t say things that will cause misunderstanding alright! It was already tense enough when you were sleeping!”

Hearing me say that, Darkness looked around her and smiled deviously at me.

... What was she thinking?

I remembered what Darkness said before the matchmaking began.

You will experience something so bad that you will wish you were dead.

Relax, it’s fine.

No matter what Darkness will say, there would be no problems.

Calm down, I am super cool today.

I could get through anything if I keep a cool head...

“Dear father, Mr Walther. Please pretend this meeting never happened. I had been keeping this from you, but actually... I am already pregnant with Kazuma’s child...”

“What are you saying about a virgin like me ahhhh! I didn’t do anything and you have my child? You think you are Mary? You are a virgin too! Careful, I will punch you in the belly!”

Seeing the interaction between Darkness who couldn’t say anything good and me, Walther was amused.

“I see, since you are bearing Kazuma’s child, I have no choice but to give up.”

After finishing, Walther stood up.

... Damn, that bitch Darkness.

You didn't know because you were sleeping, but you didn't need to say such nonsense anymore.

"I will tell my father that I rejected this marriage proposal. That should be for the best."

After finishing, Walther bidden farewell with a smile and left.

... What a great guy.

Please take Darkness back with you...

Seeing Darkness who was smiling mischievously, thinking she had succeeded, I sighed heavily.

I guess I will have to adventure with this girl a while more...

Darkness and I noticed at this moment that two persons were acting strange.

"Grandson... First grandson... My, mmmmyyyy cute grandson...!"

"Ahhwawhahh... So Kazuma and Darkness reached that stage before I realized it...! I, I have to tell everyone...! I have to tell everyone in town...!"

We had to spend thirty minutes to clear the misunderstanding with Darkness' dad who was crying and the confused Aqua.

Part 12

"Really, I would have rejected this matchmaking session if I knew that would happen."

“That’s what I wanted to say. I am grateful to you for protecting me from that landlord’s defamation. But please stop with the self sacrifice style from now on. We were so worried while you were away.”

“What are you saying, Kazuma? You were planning to push Darkness to that Walther guy, and now you are pretending nothing happened and painted a picture of a happy ending? Your character is too rotten!”

“That’s right, you dare say you were worried about me? You were planning to leave me behind in the confusion...! Aqua too, you seemed eager in marrying me off, right?”

Hearing Darkness said that, Aqua and I covered our ears.

Darkness sighed heavily and seemed to remember something and said:

“Right, Kazuma! That was your win just now! So, what do you plan to do to me? You were saying something more terrible than I can imagine...!

Darkness then looked at me with a blushing face full of anticipation.

Well, I did say that.

What should I do to her then?

No, isn’t this a really good chance?

I could...

“A, Aqua-san, why are you standing so close to me?”

“... I am just thinking, what kind of request will Kazuma make? Are you going to ask Darkness to do something terrible? Nah, I knew you were frustrated because Darkness made us so worried, but don’t go

overboard for real alright?”

With the pincer attack of Darkness’ anticipation and Aqua’s accusatory gaze...

“For, for this part, let’s discuss this after we return to the mansion...”

I stalled for time and opened the door to the mansion.

“Boo....! Sniff...! That’s too mean--! Megumin is a meanie--!”

“It’s about time you stop crying! Kazuma and the others should be back soon, they will think I am at fault if they see this... Ah!”

-- What we saw was Yunyun sniveling near the door of the mansion.

As I locked eyes with Megumin who was consoling her, I closed the door softly.

Someone pulled the door open forcefully.

“Don’t pretend you didn’t see anything, I can explain this!”

“No, it’s fine, I already knew you like to bully others.”

I said calmly to the panicking Megumin who was rushing out of the door.

“That’s wrong! To be honest, when Yunyun and I were classmates...! No, that is not important right now! It’s not the time to be so worked up over Yunyun...!”

Megumin said as she waved her staff around in a panic.

“Not important! You, you say I am not important...! No need to get worked up over me...! Wah, wahhhhhh--!”

“Ahhh! Enough, you are troublesome...! Excuse us for a moment, the two of us need to talk!”

Megumin said as she closed the door, and she talked with Yunyun in the mansion about something.

Not long later, the door opened again and Yunyun left while sniveling.

“I, I am sorry for disturbing everyone...”

Yunyun bowed deeply and walked away.

... What was with that.

We looked at each other, and could only watch as the sorrowful Yunyun left.

Entering the mansion again, we saw Megumin sitting tiredly on the carpet.

When Megumin saw us, she stood up immediately.

“Kazuma, bad news! This is bad news!”

“I know, from what I just saw, there are plenty of bad news.”

“That’s not it! Never mind Yunyun for now! That was just a squabble between us, don’t mind it! I will explain it to you when we are free!”

No, I am really concerned about what happened just now.

But Megumin was still acting as if now was not the time to be doing this.

“It really is not the time to be talking about this! The situation is really bad, it’s that prosecutor! That one called Sena is on her way here! She declared that she will definitely arrest Kazuma this time!”

Chapter 4: Turning the masked knight into a slave!

Part 1

“Satou Kazuma! Is Satou Kazuma here--?!”

Just like Megumin said, Sena charged in angrily.

“Again, again, what is it again! Is it toads? Or did something else happened?!”

I was a bit surprised by Sena’s aura, but I still managed to ask her.

“It’s the dungeon! What did you do to the dungeon! The Keele dungeon near the town! I heard that a large number of mysterious monsters has flooded out from there!”

Sena who was so angry that her ears were red said.

Mysterious monsters? That should be the one I heard about in town recently.

“No, wait, that has nothing to do with us! We did enter the dungeon before, but pushing all the blame on me when things go wrong is too much!”

Hearing me say that, the others nodded too.

... Good. From their reaction, they didn't cause any trouble that I didn't know about.

But Sena was still looking at me with suspicious eyes.

"That might be so, but I heard that you were the last batch of people to enter that dungeon. Going by your past history, the chances that you people are not involved is really..."

"What twisted reasoning is this! And we really have no clue this time. Right? Am I right? There is no problem this time right?"

Hearing me say that, the three girls shook their head strongly.

When Sena saw this, she was still doubtful, but believed us for now.

"But this is troubling... I have no idea who else but you guys will cause such trouble. I have to hire people to investigate then..."

Sena glanced at us as she spoke.

She was trying to pull the 'is there anyone who happened to be free' gaze on us.

"Ara, Ms prosecutor, could you be asking your original suspect to help in your investigation? We have plenty on our plate trying to prove our innocence in the first place."

Megumin noticed what Sena's intention was and struck first.

Sena bit her lips, but she ignored Megumin and looked straight at me.

"... I don't have the time for this, sorry but I have to reject you."

Hearing my strong rejection, Sena breathe in deeply and her shoulders slumped.

“You are right, I can’t force this on you since you are not related to this. But if you change your mind, please lend me a hand. I will be making a trip to the adventurers guild.”

After Sena finished, she turned and left the mansion.

When Sena was gone, I sighed heavily.

I am bad with such people.

Maybe it’s because she was honest and one of the few people with a clear conscience in town.

“Well, I am curious about the mysterious monsters flooding out from the dungeon... but we have things we need to do. First is clearing Kazuma’s suspicion, next is compensating the landlord for his mansion. In the end, there are no solutions for these two problems yet.”

That’s how it was.

“... Nah, Darkness, can we discuss...”

“Forget about borrowing money, I already helped you plenty. Or rather, I want to see the Kazuma who is at his wit’s end.”

Darkness said to me with a smile.

Ugh... This girl still had a grudge for the incident earlier.

... But, mysterious monsters huh.

"To be safe, I will ask you all again. You really have no idea what this incident was about? Is this really fine?"

When they heard what I said, all of them had an expression of not knowing what the situation was.

"For me, if this has nothing to do with explosion magic, I will not be interested."

"Same for me. I should say that I am different from the two of them and don't cause much trouble."

"Ah...! It's true that Darkness don't cause any major trouble, but on the other hand, you lack any stellar performance, like that battle with Destroyer!"

"Wha...! Me, Megumin you..."

Leaving the squabbling two aside, I asked the most suspicious person.

"What about you? Any ideas?"

Aqua responded to my uneasy words:

"Of course not. Really, you suspect me too much."

Hearing her frown while saying that, I sighed in relief.

"That's right. Even you won't stir up trouble all day! Sorry, my bad. It's all because of that trial, which made me so suspiciously..."

I apologized to Aqua and reflected on my action of blaming everything on Aqua...

"Really, you should trust me a little. You should say that thanks to me, monsters won't be approaching that dungeon. Wasn't there a room

where the lich was staying? The magic circle I used to purify the lich were the fruits of my super effort and seriousness. And that magic circle is still there right now, keeping evil beings out of that room!”

..... I grabbed Aqua’s shoulders.

“Hey, what did you say just now?”

“? Why, why are you grabbing me? Like I said, that was a magic circle I made seriously, it should still be working now keeping the monsters at bay...”

I didn’t let Aqua finish...

“You idiot--!”

I grabbed my head and screamed.

Part 2

-- Walking on the snow covered road, we headed for that dungeon.

“... Sniff... This is not my fault... It’s definitely not...!”

Together with Aqua who was still crying.

I walked in the front with Aqua behind me, followed by Megumin and Darkness.

I turned back and said to Aqua:

“Why do you do this every time; stirring trouble after accomplishing some good? Why? Is it an illness that compels you to cancel out your performance with mistakes?”

For now, the bad part had been overwhelming the good part though.

“Wait! This is definitely not my fault this time! Please believe me alright?! I only set up a purification magic circle in the boss’ lair, it won’t cause the mass spawning of monsters! This is different from the wandering spirits incident earlier!”

Aqua grabbed my shoulders and shook it as she spoke.

“Hey, stop that, it’s hard to walk like this! And whether you are the cause of this is not important! If Sena finds your magic circle during her investigation is the real problem!”

The magic circle in the depths of the dungeon.

We had to destroy the evidence, or they will think we had something to do with this.

I brought an item that could dispel magic circle with me, but if possible, I would like to settle this without going inside.

Aside from the wailing Aqua, we didn’t meet any problem along the way and reached the entrance to the dungeon.

“... I see, it is really a mysterious monster.”

When we reached the dungeon, we observed monsters that kept on spilling out from the entrance.

Simply put, they were masked dolls.

Wearing a mask, they are about the height of my knee and bipedal.

“What is that? How queer. I have never seen or heard of that before.”

Megumin tilted her head and watch these dolls with interest.

“At a glance, they don’t seem strong in a fight.”

Darkness said with her heavy armor clanking.

“How should I put this? I can’t accept the existence of this doll on a biological level. Why is that? Just seeing that thing makes me angry.”

Aqua picked up a rock as she said that.

-- At this moment.

“Satou-san...! What are you doing here? Did you change your mind and are willing to investigate the monsters?”

Hearing someone calling me from behind, I turned and saw Sena with a large group of adventurers in tow.

Sena was dressed lightly, wearing no armour and holding a talisman with a strange drawing on it.

So she was already here.

... No choice, I had to accommodate her.

“Now that I think about it, the appearance of the mysterious monsters will affect us too. And protecting the town from these monsters is the obligation of an adventurer.”

“I have never wished that I had a lie detection device with me so strongly.... But I am deeply grateful for your assistance.”

Sena said and bowed deeply.

Oh no, my conscience is feeling bad about this.

This person didn't have any agenda against me, she was just inflexible and persistent in investigating me as a suspect.

"If that is the case, please take this, Satou-san. It is unknown why the monsters are spawning, but they are probably summoned by someone. If that assumption is true, please take down the summoner and paste this on the magic circle."

Sena gave me a talisman as she spoke.

"... This is?"

"A talisman imbued with powerful sealing magic. By pasting this on, it will disable the magic circle, no matter how powerful it may be. Among the magic circle that summon monsters, some would still continue to summon monsters after it's caster had fallen, so please take this with you."

I see, such a convenient item-- But we don't need it.

"No, I don't need that. Don't worry, I have a good idea. With so many monsters in the dungeons, there is no need to trouble ourselves by going in... Megumin! Are you ready?"

"I am already ready, leave it to me."

Answering my call, Megumin lift her staff and walk up.

When Sena saw this, she said in a panic:

"What, what is this? What are you thinking? Could it be...!"

"Ara, you figured it out? That's right, by casting explosion at the entrance of the dungeon and sealing it..."

“No, don’t! Please find out the reason! No matter how you look at it, these monsters didn’t spawn naturally. The one lurking in the dungeon must be dangerous if it could summon so many monsters. Even after sealing the dungeon, the other party will escape if it can teleport. So the goal is for you to find the enemy that is causing this major crisis and defeat it.”

Damn, such troublesome things again.

This is bad, I don’t want to enter that dungeon at all.

And Megumin couldn’t use her explosion magic in the dungeon...

At this moment, without caring how troubling it was for me, Aqua got in position to throw rocks at the masked monsters.

She said that she was unable to accept that creature on a biological level, so she really hated it that much.

The monster that bore no hostility towards us suddenly charged at Aqua who was planning to throw rocks at it.

“Eh, wait! What, what is this!... Ara?”

And then, the monster didn’t attack Aqua, but hugged her knees tightly instead.

“What, does it want to cuddle? The mask makes me mad, but I think it looks cute when it cuddle like this... Nah nah, Kazuma, I think this doll is getting warmer. I have an ominous feeling!”

Aqua ran towards me as she yelled. I had the same ominous feeling and hurried to get away from Aqua.

And so--

With the sound of explosion, the doll that was hugging Aqua tightly had disappeared without a trace.

What was left was Aqua who was lying face down on the ground with her clothes all torn up from the explosion.

“... As you can see, this mysterious monster stick to people who are moving and explodes. The adventurers guild wasn’t sure what to do about this too.”

“I see, this is troubling indeed.”

“Why are you all so calm! Can’t you worry about me a little?! At least check to see how I am doing!”

As I was chatting calmly with Sena, Aqua leapt up and protest with a face on the verge of tears.

But she seemed to be lively.

“But this is troubling... This monster could only attack by exploding, and would detonate if we hurt it a little; Even if we don’t harm it, it would stick to us when we don’t pay attention and explode anyway. From the current situation, we could only stay far away and defeat them one at a time.”

Sena said as she looked at Megumin consoling Aqua, who was hugging her knees.

Aqua might act like this, but her hagaromo was the strongest godly equipment.

If not for that, she would have suffered considerable injury from that powerful explosion.

What a troublesome monster.

Do we have to throw rocks at it as we advance?

But there was already a large number of monster spilling onto the surface, who knew how many more were congregating in the dungeon.

Exterminating these monsters one at a time would be a little...

Furthermore, I couldn't comprehend what the goal of these mysterious monsters were.

In the end, who unleashed these monsters, and for what purpose?

-- As I was troubled about these things, Darkness suddenly approached a doll and punched it without a word.

"Hmmm? What are you doing all of a sudden?!"

As the surrounding adventurers and I were panicking because of her action, the doll which took the punch stuck onto Darkness. Shortly after, that doll exploded splendidly just like the one that stuck onto Aqua.

After that explosion--

"... Hmmm, I could take that. No problem."

Darkness who was saying that was still full of life.

As Sena and the other adventurers were still shocked by the tenacity of Darkness...

"I will clear a path, just follow behind me, Kazuma."

Darkness said something really manly.

The dungeon exploration this time wasn't a sneaking mission like the previous time.

The plan this time was to attack openly from the front with the other adventurers.

At this moment Megumin tugged at the corner of my shirt and said:

"Kazuma, Kazuma, I will only get in the way inside, can I standby out here? I will be ready to use magic at the entrance of the dungeon, just run out if you run into a powerful monster."

True, the one summoning these monsters should be inside the dungeon.

And it should be very strong.

It's better to let Megumin standby here so she could be the ace if a powerful monster chased after us out of the dungeon.

"If that was the case, I will wait for you guys together with Megumin. I will cast buffing spells on you before you go in, so both of you be careful."

Aqua said as she dusted off her clothes...

"Hey, wait a minute! You are coming too! You are different from Megumin and could be of use in the dungeon!"

"I don't wanna--! I don't want to go into the dungeon anymore! I will be left behind if I go into the dungeon! That's right, and a large number of undead will chase after me--!"

Aqua covered her ears and squatted down, voicing her refusal while shaking her head.

Seemed like she had a trauma when I threatened to leave her behind the last time we visited the dungeon.

I pondered over it, and decided to leave Aqua outside too.

With this girl around, the chance of meeting undead would skyrocket.

And other adventurers would be entering the dungeon too, if we meet any undead without physical form, someone should be able to attack it.

“The only ones entering the dungeon from my party will be just Darkness and me.”

“Yeah... To be alone in the dark dungeon with Kazuma. I think Kazuma is more dangerous than the monster.”

“Be careful, I might just leave you in the depths of the dungeon and give you the same trauma as Aqua.”

As we were squabbling, the other adventurers seemed to have decided the members to enter the dungeon.

Some of the adventurers stayed behind on the surface to protect Sena and exterminate the monsters.

About twenty men and women would be entering the dungeon with us.

The plan was for Darkness to take the lead and the other adventurers to follow behind--

-- The oil lamp in my hand illuminated the dim passage in the dungeon.

Darkness who might be attacked by the suicide bombers was holding a great sword instead of an oil lamp.

I was several steps behind Darkness and held the oil lamp up high, allowing Darkness who was walking in the front to see the road.

The other adventurers fell into line behind us.

It might be a dark and moist dungeon, but there was nothing to fear with so many people around.

That might be so, but our goal was different from them.

The other adventurers were here to investigate the reason why the monsters are spawning, but our objective was to dispel the magic circle inside the lich's room and destroy the evidence.

And so, having them follow behind was troubling for me.

--But, on the other hand...

"Fufufufu, hahaha! Kazuma look! I hit it, I hit it! Even I can hit these fellows accurately!"

Darkness who was walking before me was swinging her sword happily, slashing at the dolls that made no attempt to dodge.

As expected, the dolls counter attacked by suicide bombing, but that just covered the face and armor of Darkness with a bit of dust, and she continued charging happily as though nothing was happening.

Well, she was probably a bit concerned about not being able to land a hit on her opponent.

If that was so, stop being stubborn and learn a 'long sword' skill alright?

Maybe her attacks falling made her happy because she was useful. Darkness rampaged through the dungeon like a tank.

The dungeon created by the renowned lich was really sturdy, showing no sign of collapsing despite the series of explosion.

“Hey-- Wait, wait for us! Slow down...!”

I could hear the voice of the adventurers coming from behind.

I turned back and realized we had pulled away from the others due to Darkness’ fast rampage.

And those monsters kept jumping out from either side of the dungeons.

“Wait...! Ahhh, it’s sticking on me! Hey, someone pull it off me!”

“Wahhh, don’t come here! Don’t come--!”

The explosion of these monsters were really powerful.

They might not be as durable as Darkness or wear godly items like Aqua, but an adventurer in armor wouldn’t die so easily.

I felt a bit bad about that, but I should use this chance...

“Keep it up Darkness! Go straight down the passage! Keep charging ahead!”

“Okay, leave it to me! Ahhh, such a thrilling experience! I think this is the first time I am fulfilling my role as a crusader!”

The excited Darkness did not realize what the situation was like behind her.

Charge into the depths in one shot and we can say goodbye to this dungeon in no time.

Part 3

We reached our destination in the deepest part of the dungeon a bit too easily, which was near the lich's room.

If I remember correctly, this should be the deepest part of this passage.

"... What is with this? No matter how I look at it, this must be the boss of these monsters."

Before me and Darkness was a figure sitting crossed leg in the lich's room, working hard at making the dolls.

He was wearing a suit that didn't match the dungeon at all, and his hands were covered in white gloves. The mask he was wearing had a similar design with the dolls that attacked us.

The mask that didn't cover the mouth had an ominous feeling.

Maybe he didn't saw us even though I was holding up an oil lamp, or maybe he was too focused on making his dolls, but this fellow didn't even look at us.

I couldn't see his face with his mask on, but from his build, he should be a man.

As I was wondering what to do, Darkness took large steps towards that masked man.



“Hey... What are you doing here? If you are making that doll, that means you are the mastermind behind this commotion, right?”

Darkness then drew out her sword and took a stance.

The masked man only faced us now, as if he only noticed us after Darkness said that.

Looking closely, that guy was tall.

He didn't have anything that looked like a weapon on his hands, but it was obvious that he was not a mere minion character.

The eye part of the mask gleamed with a red light, and the exposed mouth smirked.

“Ohh... I didn't expect anyone to be able to reach here. Adventurers, welcome to my dungeon! Thou art correct, moi art the source and the origin of all evil! Moi art a boss of the demon king army, the duke of hell that commands the devils! The arch devil that could see through anything in the world, Vanir!”

An unexpectedly strong enemy appeared!

-- In the dim dungeon, I backed away slowly.

Darkness held her sword cautiously against Vanir. She was tense since this was a boss of the demon king army after all.

Oh no, I didn't expect to meet a boss of the demon king army with just Darkness and me.

No, now that I thought about it, there were plenty of signs.

For example, the toads that emerged out of the ground as though they were fearing something.

What spooked them wasn't the explosion spell.

Just like that time when Beldia showed up here, the weak monsters had all fled.

"Darkness. Hey, Darkness, we can't handle this situation by ourselves, let's think of a way to escape!"

"What are you saying! As a devotee of the Goddess Eris, how could I retreat in the face of the devil, and a boss of the demon king army on top of that! Even if it will kill me, I will bring him down!"

What a stubborn woman!

After hearing what Darkness said, Vanir smirked enthusiastically:

"Ohh, thou wish to defeat moi? Defeat Mr. Vanir who some say is stronger than the demon king? But... the girl who is worried that the man over there saw your six pack when thou were naked in the shower. I couldn't fathom why art thou is so angry, but moi heard that eating some small bones will help in alleviating your nature of being quick to anger. Part of my mask was made from the bones of magic dragons, I don't mind letting you bite it."

"Six pack, six pack...! You, stop spouting nonsense you minion of the demon king! Kazuma, this guy is lying! I don't have any six packs, I am not worried about it!"

"Eh, don't get agitated, Darkness. Calm down!"

I restrained Darkness who was waving her sword and about to attack.

Vanir ignored the enraged Darkness, maintaining his position of sitting cross legged and said:

“Please calm down. I didn’t come here to pick a fight with thou. It’s because that fellow, the demon king ask moi to investigate something. Also, I have some business with the useless boss in Axel who become more impoverished the harder she worked.

Darkness and I looked at each other when we heard Vanir said that.

Part 4

Darkness who was standing at one side kept her sword raised and alert, ready to strike at any time. I sat on the floor of the dungeon and listened as Vanir spoke.

“First, although I am a boss of the demon king army, I am just maintaining the barrier of the castle because of his request, so I’m just a boss in name. I am known to others as a devil. The best delicacy for devils are the negative feelings produced by the hatred of human. In my eyes, humans are the producer of delicacies, so I won’t perform stupid things such as killing or harming thou. Whenever a human is born, I will be so happy that I would dance in the courtyard.”

“I, I see... But to stimulate our negative feelings, that means you will harm us correct? There won’t be any negative feelings if our lives are peaceful.”

He had not shown hostility yet, but since he was a boss of the demon king army, we won’t be able to handle him with just the two of us.

It’s better to play along with him and avoid fighting.

Speaking of which, a boss in name maintaining the barrier...

He was someone just like Wiz.

Vanir remained seated cross legged as he created dolls skillfully while speaking:

“For negative feelings, there are tons of them in various intensity. The taste of every devil are different and have differing preference. Some devil likes fear and despair, while others are like me, transforming into a great beauty to approach men, and after working hard to make the men fall for me, I will reveal my true form and say ‘too bad, it’s actually moi’. I will then taste their feeling as they cry tears of blood.”

“I’m starting to think it would be better to kill you off.”

I looked with suspicion at the devil wearing a suspicious mask.

-- The demon king seemed to had tasked this devil with the job of scouting out the humans that defeated Beldia.

“As I was toying with the demon king’s subordinates and feeding off their negative feelings... he pleaded with me ‘don’t sloth in my castle and bully my subordinates, go work once in a while...’ I was thinking about visiting my old friend residing in this town, so I took the job. On my way here, I found this dungeon without a master. I thought that it suited moi and came in on my own.”

What about your work? Your old friend? There had to be a limit on how carefree you could be! I wanted to retort, but if he said ‘I will start doing my work then’, it would be troubling.

The humans who defeated Beldia were us after all.

-- Although I wanted to ignore this fellow and scam, there was something I couldn’t ignore.

"You mentioned that it would be troubling for you if humans were harmed, so what's with these dolls? They kept spilling out from the dungeon and gave plenty of trouble to the townsfolk."

"... Hmm? These things are used by moi to exterminate the useless monsters inside this dungeon. I see, since they had made their way out of the dungeon, it means there are no more monsters inside the dungeon. It's time for moi to stop the mass production of Vanir dolls and begin the next phase."

"... The next phase? What are you scheming?"

Hearing me say that, Vanir returned the half finished doll into dust and said:

"It's rude to call it scheming, the man who was as worried as a bear and pacing around the room all day because the armour girl didn't return home for a few days. I have a grand dream as a devil. I came to this place in order to fulfill that dream."

"Hey! Shut up, you did say that you are a devil that could see through all things, but why are you describing it as if you had seen it with your own eyes... And you, you, stop squirming about!"

Darkness who was blushing and stealing glances at me was annoying.

It was true that I was worried about her, but I didn't pace around my room... The frequency should be negligible.

"The dreams of a devil doesn't sound like a good thing. Anyway, can I ask what kind of dream is that?"

Under the angry glare of Darkness, Vanir nodded...

"For moi who had existed for near eternity... I have been harbouring the urge to go out with a bang for quite some time now-- And that is to pass

on elegantly after dining on the finest negative emotions. I had been thinking for a long time, I don't even remember when I first had this thought. I had been thinking, what do I need to do in order to dine on the negative emotion I am most fond of. And I have finally found the best idea..."

Vanir smiled at this juncture, and I waited with bated breath.

"First, I will obtain a dungeon. Next I will dispatch my evil minions to standby in each room, setting grueling traps in them! Powerful veteran adventurers will then come forth to challenge themselves! After experiencing numerous challenges, someone will finally make it to my residence in the depths of the dungeon!"

Vanir got more and more excited during his monologue, his hand gestures were larger and his tone more agitated.

"And waiting in the depths of the dungeon will of course, be moi! I will then say 'It was impressive for you to make your way here, adventurers! Come, great fortune awaits if you could defeat moi...!' After my opening speech would be the final battle! After a fierce fight, the adventurers finally defeat moi. In the end, a treasure chest with heavy seals would appear behind my tattered body. As I start to lose consciousness, the adventurers who overcame immense hardship open that treasure chest before my eyes...!"

Darkness and I gulped and waited in silence.

"..... Inside the box would be a piece of paper saying, 'Thank you for your patronage!' The adventurers would look at this paper with a blank face, that's the scene I want to see as I head toward my demise."

"Don't do that. That's so pitiful, anything but that..."

"Hey Kazuma, I think we should take out this fellow after all."

Vanir smirked at me and Darkness lightly and said:

“A friend of mine is operating a shop here. Moi original plan was to work in her shop to save up money, and use those funds along with the help of my friend to create a large dungeon. But when I passed by this dungeon, I realized there was no owner. So I changed my mind and decided to use this place instead.”

“Staying here for such a reason is a bit... Anyway, I know what you are planning to do here. Since you won't be creating anymore dolls, there's nothing more to discuss. We are here because we need to do something in the room behind you. To tell you the truth, we are here to dispel the magic circle in that room.”

“Huh...! Hey Kazuma, instead of that magic circle, we should take care of this guy! You want to ignore this boss of the demon king army? The enemy of humanity is right before us!”

That might be so, but what can just Darkness and I do against the boss of the demon king army?

As I was getting up and planning to leave after dispelling the magic circle...

“... Magic circle? Ohh, That magic circle that gave moi quite a bit of trouble? Thou art too kind. I don't know which annoying fellow did this, but this irritating magic circle is keeping me out of the room. If thou is willing to dispel it for me, I will gift you a Vanir doll made by moi which will laugh in the middle of the night.”

“No, no thanks. It would be troubling for us if this magic circle remains here. We will be leaving after dispelling that, please do as you pleased after that.”

My plan was to rush off after getting rid of the magic circle, so I said so casually.

“Why would the existence of this magic circle be bad for thou? Let moi peer into thou’s past...”

My words stirred the curiosity of Vanir and he said this light heartedly...

... No, wait...!

“..... Fuhahaha!”

Before I could stop him, Vanir seemed to have observed something and laughed dryly.

Feeling a strange aura coming from Vanir, Darkness moved up to protect me.

“Fuhahaha.... Fuhahahaha! Fuhahahahahaha! Should I say this is as expected or unexpected?! So the magic circle that is troubling was set by thou’s party mate! Even an arch devil like moi couldn’t breach it, to be able to set up such a magic circle, could that priest be...!”

Damn, I didn’t know what was happening, but this devil appeared to be agitated!

Vanir stood up slowly, his eyes that were looking at me emitted a red gleam.

Unlike the red pupil of the Crimson magic clan, it fitted the image of a devil, drawing out the instinctual fear of men. Eyes that were red like blood.

“Ohhh,,, the vision is clear to moi! On the surface! At the entrance of this dungeon! I see the priest who set up the magic circle drinking tea leisurely while looking bored.”

If what he said was true, I had the urge to go back immediately and beat her up. I want to scold her for making life so difficult for me.

The face below Vanir’s mask was full of life.

“Alright. That girl who is really concerned with the ‘overboard demand’ after losing a bet to this man, can’t get it off her mind, is full of anticipation and keeps squirming around. That man who is thinking about what to do to that girl and is itching to do so. Open a path for moi! Don’t worry, ‘not killing humans’ is moi iron rule. That’s right, I will not kill humans... all ‘humans’! That girl who gave moi so much trouble with her magic circle, I will show her!”

“Nothing is on my mind I’m not anticipating and I’m not squirming stop your nonsense! Don’t, don’t mess around!”

“That that that’s right! I am not itching at all! No, no such thing!:

We barely endured the psychological attack of Vanir who could see through minds as he took a step towards us.

This fellow said he was a devil that could see through all things, and he emphasized just now he didn’t kill ‘humans’.

Which meant he knew Aqua’s true identity...?

At this moment, Darkness lifted her long sword and pointed it at Vanir who was closing in on us.

“If you are planning to harm Aqua, there is no way I will back down. As a crusader serving the goddess Eris, I swear on my honor that you shall not pass!”

“Not just your six packs, even your brain is hard and inflexible, girl. If I am serious, it’s easy for me to finish you off. But I am not planning to kill humans. It is hard to judge which person will produce an exquisite negative emotion after all. Go home and finish that ‘overboard demand’ with each other. This devil with foresight eyes guarantees thou that if you return now, no one will get in your way, things will definitely develop as you hope for.”

This, this guy...

“Ignore him Darkness! These are the so called whispers of the devil! Don’t get tempted by his alluring words.”

“I, I won’t get tempted! Kazuma, think of the time and place okay?!”

Strange? My heart was shaken immensely ...!

What’s with that foresight eyes devil? He made me think that ‘can’t get it off her mind, is full of anticipation and keep squirming around’ was real.

... I stole a glance at Darkness and found her cheeks slightly red, the tip of her sword was shaking, showing how shaken her heart was.

“Fuhahahahaha! Both are interested in the other party as a member of the opposite gender, but too scared to cross that line because thou art party mates! Scurry off! Or thou could rest in that room with a magic circle after I had passed through before returning!”

They really were the sweet murmurs of the devil!

None of the enemies I encountered had set such a vicious trap!

“Hey, Kazuma! What are you so hung up about! We live in the same mansion, it would be awkward if we develop such a relationship! Get your act together!”

“Ahh! That’s right, this is Darkness, I have to get my act together! It’s just that her looks and body suits my taste, but it is that Darkness inside, don’t tricked by a moment of lust!”

“You, you... You will get it after we go back...!”

Girls were so complicated.

“Ohh... You resisted my temptation. But how should I go about this? All of my skills are so powerful they will kill in a single hit. For example moi lethal laser. Because it is a lethal laser, thou who art a human would perish with one hit, thou shall perish even if it doesn’t hit. Aside from this, there is the Vanir eye beams, but it has the side effect of burning moi eyes after using it, so I had not tried it before...”

“Enough, enough! I will go crazy if you go on! I will not let you go to Aqua, you will have to defeat me first if you want to go there!”

Darkness slashed at Vanir after saying that!

Part 5

Vanir effortlessly dodged Darkness’ continuous attack as he laughed happily”

“Fuhahaha! Why are the attack of this fierce girl not landing at all!?... Hmmm? Where’s the other one? That man who is good at talking but mediocre in performance, where did he go?”

Vanir looked around the area, searching for me who suddenly disappeared.

... Sorry for being mediocre, my skills just happened to be plain alright!?

“Stop looking around! Your opponent is me!”

As he listened to Darkness talk...

“Where did the man who looked like a schemer went off to? How should I put this, such unscrupulous jerks are more dangerous than a muscle headed crusader. I can feel his presence, but where did he...?”

The moment Darkness slashed at Vanir, I put down the oil lamp and stuck close to the wall in the darkness. Using ‘hide’, I sneaked to Vanir’s back.

So what if I was a schemer, no one was stupid enough to fight the boss of the demon king army head on.

“Don’t look down on me, face me--!”

Darkness swung her sword sideways.

Vanir leapt backwards.

-- His back was right before me as I stood ready.

I stopped using ‘hide’ and used all my weight to give Vanir a flying kick!

“Ughh! Unscrupulous jerk, when art thou sneaked here... Oh, oh no...!”

Vanir who dodged Darkness’ earlier attacks took a few unsteady steps forward, right into Darkness’ attack range. Darkness’ attack which was powerful but lacked accuracy cleaved across Vanir’s body.

Vanir’s left hand flew into the air, his torso suffered critical damage and he kneeled onto the ground--!

“To think that... Curses, moi is too careless...! To think a talent like you was hiding in a beginner town...! Ugh... Is this how it will... end for moi...”

After his speech, Vanir’s body crumpled into dust along with his tuxedo, only the mask was left behind.

The lantern lit our surroundings dimly, and only Darkness’ heavy breathing could be heard in the dark dungeon.

“No way... Did I... Just defeat a boss... of the demon king army...?”

Darkness had a face of disbelief, gripping the long sword in her hand hard. Her adrenaline from the battle was still running and she kept on trembling.

“... If you say something like ‘did I just defeat?’, it most probably means you didn’t. But that guy seemed surprised when he was slashed, so it should be for real I guess?”

“As thou art hoping it to be true...”

A voice came from behind in response to my words.

The sound originated from the mask that had fallen onto the ground.

The mask absorbed the earth from the dungeon, forming slowly into a body.

In the end, the body was wearing a suit, and were identical to that man just now.

“Did thou really think you had defeated moi? Sorry, not at all! Fuhahaha! Fuhahahaha! Ara, the negative emotion coming from thou are really delicious!”

I want to kill this guy!

“What kind of absurd body is that, you think you can do such cheat like things because you are a boss of the demon king army?!”

“Boohoo... I thought I really got him... I thought the me that couldn't hit the enemy normally had taken out a boss of the demon king army... I didn't do much during the fight against destroyer and I thought I finally had the chance to perform...”

As Darkness was saying that depressedly with the tip of her sword shaking, Vanir smiled happily:

“Fuhahaha! This body is just a fake body created by moi magic, the mask is my real body. No matter how much thou slash at me, this body will at most return to dust! In the end, the place where moi body dissipates will be fertile as the earth from my body is full of mana. The flowers will bloom and the butterfly...”

“I don't know what the hell you are talking about! My headache worsens whenever you speak! Damn it, what now, Darkness? Should we withdraw for now?”

“I don't wanna! Being made a fool is a shame of the knights! I must make this fellow pay...!”

Darkness made a strong declaration against Vanir.

“Yes, I understand. But I have no desire to play with thou like this. It is time for moi to use my skill for this type of situation! I have a hidden skill that won't harm anyone and will only absorb negative emotions, observe!”

After saying that, Vanir used his right hand to lift his mask...!

“Hey Darkness! This looks bad! Let’s get out of here first!”

“Too late! Crusader with a tenacious body, lend thou body to moi!”

Vanir shouted as he threw his mask at Darkness--!

Part 6

“... Darkness? Hey... Darkness! Say something!”

After getting hit, Darkness’ face was covered by that mask. Her hand holding her sword lowers naturally, and she remained still with her head down.

This development was not good.

According to what Vanir said and the current situation, Vanir probably took over Darkness’ body.

And in actual fact, the body of Vanir started crumbling into dust after the mask had been thrown out.

Darkness who had put on her mask raised her head slowly...!

“Fuhahaha! Fuahahaha! Listen up kid! this special power of moi, (what should I do Kazuma, my body has been taken over!) How about it kid, if thou dare attack this girl, (I don’t mind! Don’t hold back, attack as you wish! Quickly come! This is the most wonderful situation!)”

Words that didn’t make sense came out from Darkness’ mouth.

“... What are you trying to say?”

“How could this be, what is with this (beautiful) woman?!... Damn, damn it, don’t sneak in words and play around! But seriously, this girl’s mental tenacity is too strong... (an excellent role model of a crusader!)... Shut up!”

By right, this should be a crisis, but Darkness was handling this calmly.

Or rather, she seemed to be having fun.

“To resist moi control, thou art a formidable opponent! (Not, not really...) But if you keep on resisting my control, thou shall suffer horrible pains! (What, what did you say?!) Fuhahaha! Let’s see how long you can resist!... Huh? There are no negative emotions, what is welling out from her is... pleasure...?”

Seeing Darkness standing there motionless, I decided to leave her there and finish my original objective.

I entered the room that belonged to that Lich to dispel all traces of the magic circle with the magic item I was given.

As I was doing that...

“(I...! I won’t give in to this pain...!) Thou has respectable courage! But enduring it any longer will cause thou to break down mentally...! ... Could it be, thou is enjoying this?”

I heard Vanir said this in confusion.

Finally, I finished clearing the traces of the magic circle and returned to the two that was struggling internally.

“Alright Darkness, mission accomplished! We just need to return to the surface and that’s it! Let’s link up with Aqua and run away!”

I walked towards Darkness while I said that, but she pointed her long sword at me.

“Don’t come any closer, brat (Kazuma, don’t worry about me! Just leave me here and go!) Don’t think things will proceed as you wished (...Ahhh! I always wanted to say that line...!) Thou has feeling for this girl and don’t want to see her get hurt, right? (!) If this girl continues to resist moi power (Ka, Kazuma, this devil who claims to have foresight just said something intriguing.) If you don’t want that to happen, thou should stop this girl. (I am happy that you feel this way about me. I really am, but the difference in our status is too vast, and we are in the same party...) Annoying ahhhh!”

“You two are the annoying ones! Please, one at a time alright, I don’t get what you are trying to say!”

Seeing Vanir losing it and yelling, I yelled back defiantly.

“Ughhh...! Choosing this body was a big failure (Hey, don’t say my body is a failure, how rude!) Silence! Moi will be leaving, thou shut your mouth!”

Seemed like Vanir couldn’t take over Darkness’ iron-like will completely and was about to give up.

Even a boss of the demon king army couldn’t handle that pervert.

Vanir slumped his shoulder tiredly and lifted his arm to take off the mask.

-- I remembered something suddenly.

It would be more troublesome if Vanir recovered his original strength.

After all, as long as his main body-- the mask was fine, he could change to a new body if he gets into danger.

And those beams and laser he mentioned sound dangerous.

Could he use those skills if he was inside Darkness' body?

If he became serious, Darkness and I wouldn't be able to stop him from going to the surface.

-- What if we trapped him inside Darkness' body?

Not only was this the body of a human he was not familiar with, there was also Darkness who would get in his way too.

... How about sealing him inside Darkness' body, bring him to the surface and ask Aqua and the others to think of a way to resolve this.

That's right, since this guy wanted to find Aqua, I would bring him there.

I walked to Vanir who wanted to take off the mask.

-- I then pasted the sealing talisman Sena gave me onto the mask.

"What are you doing, brat...? What is happening? I can't touch... Hey... What is this talisman, brat? My fingers get deflected even if I want to touch it (Yeah, something is fluttering before my eyes, how irritating... Wait. Hey Kazuma, Isn't that...!)"

The two of them tried their best to remove the talisman, but it seemed that the one being sealed couldn't touch that talisman.

"It's the talisman Sena gave me. Darkness, maintain this and return to the surface with me. Keep Vanir within your body and bring him to Aqua and the others. We will then ask Aqua to cleanse the thing within you!"

“(Hyaa!?)”

That scream sounded so uniform as though only one of them did so.

Part 7

Most of the doll-like monsters in the dungeon had been cleared, so we didn't meet any resistance.

“Brat! This girl is suffering tremendous pain as she resist moi control! If this goes on, she will suffer mental trauma! It is in your best interest to tear off the talisman and let moi go! Or else... (It's true Kazuma! I have been feeling something terrible... very terrible...! Ahhh, this is the first time I felt something so intense, as expected of a boss of the demon king army! I can't take it anymore...!)”

Probably because of the pain, the back of Darkness' neck was sweating as she followed me while panting.

From the looks of things, Darkness still had control over her body.

On the way back, the adventurers who entered the dungeon with us were stunned when they saw Darkness wearing a mask, but I didn't have time for them right now.

“Just hang on a little while longer, Darkness! We are almost there! I will release you from the pain when we reach the surface!”

“Ughhh... What is with this weird situation... (It's fine, just leave me.)”

.....

“What did you say?” x2

Vanir and I cried out in unison.

-- To be honest, bringing a boss of the demon king army back to the surface made me feel uneasy.

But he was using that body as a container.

Frankly speaking, Darkness was incredibly clumsy.

Even when she slashed at a target right before her, she would miss once for every five tries.

I wanted to ask her how could she be clumsy to such an extent.

Anyway, the adventurers on the surface should be enough to suppress Darkness.

"Darkness, great work for enduring this long! Leave the rest to Aqua, the other adventurers and I will restrain your body..."

I said that when I saw the light at the end of the tunnel. But before I finished...

"... Fuhaha... Fuhahahaha! Art thou speaking to moi?"

The voice spoke very clearly, and wasn't interrupted by Darkness like earlier.

"Taking over complete! Brat, you underestimated moi! I was holding back earlier! If I approach thou's companion with such an appearance, she will welcome moi with her guard down! When I see thou's priest companion, I will cleave her right in the head!"

As Vanir was shouting this, he dashed up the stairs faster than I could even though he was wearing heavy armor.

Oh shit oh shit!

That fellow's target was Aqua. She might be wearing a strange mask, but no one would stop Darkness from getting near Aqua!

"Wake up, Darkness! You are better than this, do you want to give in to the minions of the devil?!"

"Fuhahaha! It's useless, brat! I don't know what this girl is thinking, but when the pain exceeds a certain threshold (I, I can't anymore...) will hand over the body... Damn, damn it, don't make such weird noise!"

Oh no, that pervert can't stand it anymore!

Vanir moved the body he had total control over and said:

"Alright, time for a touching reunion for comrades who made it out of the dungeon alive! My hated enemy! I want to see what thou will do to a comrade whose body had been taken over by the enemy...!"

She shouted loudly and leapt outside...!

"Sacred Exorcism--!"

"(Ahhhhhh--!)"

Aqua who was waiting at the entrance of the dungeon casted her spell without warning, enveloping her in white flames.

Part 8

Vanir who jumped out of the dungeon was on fire. He couldn't withstand it and fell on one knee.

"Dark, Darkness--!"

And of course, he did so while controlling Darkness' body.

I rushed out of the dungeon, rushing to Darkness' side to check on her.

But on the surface, Darkness had no signs of burns at all.

"Fu... Fufufu... Fuhahahaha! Fuhahahaha!"

And unexpectedly, Vanir who was hit by Aqua's spell didn't seem to be bothered.

"Hey Aqua! Don't attack Darkness with magic so suddenly, it's bad for my heart!"

I lectured Aqua, but she said unapologetically:

"What are you saying, that spell is harmless against humans! I felt something evil coming out, so I was thinking I should cast the spell first and..."

"(I, I see... That's fine, I was just surprised... Please give me a heads up next time alright...)"

That attack probably made Vanir relax his control, allowing Darkness' will to show up.

"Hey Aqua! A boss of the demon king army is trying to take over Darkness' body! The enemy appears to be a devil! An opponent you are great at dealing with!"

"A, a boss of the demon king army?!"

When I said that, Sena who was observing the situation from a distance shouted before Aqua could react.

When she heard me said that, Aqua frowned and walked towards Darkness with an irked face.

She slowly covered her nose and said:

“Smelly! This is too smelly! That’s right, this is the stench of a devil! Really, how did Darkness get stained with this filth!”

“(Hmmm?! I, I don’t think I am smelly...?)”

Aqua’s words made Darkness tear up under the mask.

“Fufufufu... (Kazuma, smell me, it’s not smelly right!) Fuhahaha, fuhahaha! (Even if there is a stench, it must be due to me charging around the dungeon just now.) Shut up! This is the scene where moi makes a cool speech, so keep quiet!”

Darkness became depressed when even Vanir lectured her,

“Fuhahaha! Greetings, cursed priest that shares the same name as that notorious goddess of water! I am Vanir! Duke of hell, one of the boss of the demon king army Arch Devil Vanir!”

Vanir had control of the body’s speech function, but Darkness had control over the body. While Vanir was making a grand monologue, his body seemed bored as it kicked at the small pebbles on the ground.

... By the way, he mentioned the priest who shared the same name with the goddess of water.

Seemed like this devil realized Aqua’s true identity.

“Not bad, greeting me with exorcism magic without hesitation! Fuhahaha, that’s the reason why the infamous Axis devotees are shunned by all! Does thou not know basic courtesy?”

“Annoying-- being courteous to the devil, what nonsense are you saying? Devils are worse than the undead who goes against the will of

the gods. A parasite that can't survive without the negative emotion of humans--! Puhehe!"

The two were silent for a moment after this exchange...

"Sacred High Exorcism--!"

"Naive!"

Aqua casted a spell without warning, but Vanir dodged to the side at the last moment.

"Why are you dodging, Darkness! Be a good girl and keep still!"

"(I, I know, but my body is moving by itself!)"

As Aqua and Vanir started their fight, Sena and Megumin came to my side.

"Kazuma, Kazuma! What is with this situation? Why is Darkness wearing that mask...! How sly, I want a mask like that too! That mask is stimulating my blood of the crimson magic race!"

"What stupid things are you talking about, now is not the time for that! Darkness' body has been taken over by a boss of the demon king army, his main body is that mask! You have any ideas?"

"Satou-san, how did it turn out this way? That is indeed a boss of the demon king army on the wanted list, the one who possess foresight and clairvoyance, the devil of foresight Vanir. Why is a big shot like him doing here?"

Sena whose face was ash white said in a voice closed to screaming.

"That guy is here to investigate the people who defeated Beldia, a boss of the demon king army. He had another more troubling objective, but

let's talk about that later. Right now, I have sealed him using the talisman Sena gave me. He is that mask on Darkness, and he is trapped inside Darkness right now."

Hearing me say that, Sena commented with a bewildered expression:

"Trapped, in her body? You sealed a boss of the demon king army inside the body of your comrade?! What's wrong with you? What are you thinking!"

"... But, this situation isn't good. That devil could even endure a hit from Aqua's exorcism spell. He is able to do so because he is possessing Darkness' body. Crusaders are holy knights that serve the gods, that's why Darkness has strong resistance against light magic. It should be better to tear off the talisman and release that devil for now."

After hearing Megumin say that, I looked at the devil Vanir who kept on dodging Aqua's spell.

Under his skilled control, Darkness's clumsy body was not affected by the heavy armor, toying with Aqua with his agile movements.

What the hell, I thought we would win if we trapped him inside Darkness' body!

I was surprised by how high Darkness' physical specs was.

"Release that guy? He is trapped in Darkness' body right now, so he can only attack with a long sword. But that devil said he could use killing laser, that would be hard to handle if we release him from Darkness' body."

When I looked again, the other adventurers had also joined in the fray. They were providing support, attempting to slow Vanir down so Aqua's spell could hit.

“... This, this is bad, if this goes on...”

“... Things don’t look good...”

Following Megumin’s gaze, I confirmed the situation--

“Damn! That Darkness is so strong...!”

“I can’t hit her! She parried my attack with her sword easily! Her strikes are heavy and amazingly fast! We are only alive because she was holding back...!”

“Fuhahahaha! This body isn’t bad! The strength and stamina are great! The resistance against holy magic makes it even more splendid! (Boohoo... I am causing trouble for the other adventurers, but I am a little happy to gain the upper hand against so many opponents...!)”

That girl... Now is not the time to be happy!

“Nah Darkness! Enough, stop thrashing around--! Do you want to be saved? Or you don’t want to be saved? Or you are feeling great because you are showing the adventurers who looked down on you who is boss?”

“(No, no I’m not!) Fuhahaha! What’s wrong thou weaklings, come at moi! Don’t hold back!”

As Darkness was trying to explain herself, Vanir spouted taunting words, making the expression of the adventurers around her turn sour.

“Darkness, you little! Acting cocky because your attack is landing!”

“I thought you were the one that was the most level headed one in Kazuma’s party! To think that you...!”

“Surround her! Encircle that crusader!”

“(The, the one taunting wasn’t me!) Fuhahaha! No matter how many minions you throw at moi, I will beat all of you off! (Ahhhh...)”

Vanir was talking in Darkness’ voice.

To the adventurers, there was no way to differentiate which was Darkness and which was Vanir.

And because of that, Darkness was drawing more and more hate from the crowd. For some reason, the adventurers were scolding Darkness instead of Vanir.

“She is obviously being manipulated by the enemy, but everyone is scolding her, how pitiful! Isn’t there anything we can do?”

Megumin tugged on my shirt and said.

In actual fact, Darkness was being scolded as she overwhelmed the crowd with her abilities...!

“(Ahhh... The adventurers that talked to me nicely is looking at me with eyes of disdain...!) I sense feelings of joy... Why is that so? What is happening...!”

.....

“But she seems so happy.”

“... That, that’s why we have to save her! Don’t you have any ideas, Kazuma?”

Even if you asked me, the current Darkness was beyond what I could handle.

In the current situation, we don’t have the means of defeating that devil.

Even Aqua's spell didn't have any effect, there was nothing we could do...

"You are so annoying! Why are you so hard to deal with!"

"That's what moi wants to say! Damn it, how despicable to attack in waves! Don't think you can play around because moi don't want to kill thou, adventurers!"

Meanwhile, Aqua and Vanir was still battling.

When the adventurers figured out that Vanir's target was Aqua, they formed a human wall to hold Vanir back.

Aqua kept casting her exorcism spell from behind the human wall, but both parties couldn't break the stalemate.

But the balance was finally broken by Vanir.

He probably had gotten used to controlling Darkness' body. Swinging the 2-handed long sword with ease, he started destroying the weapons of the adventurers one by one.

In terms of her strength and stamina, Darkness was well ahead of the other adventurers.

And with the vast combat experience of the devil and agility, the sub-par crusader Darkness was powerful enough to win against an adventurer party of ten.

"I think that girl seemed a little blessed today. Her performance has been eye catching in all sorts of ways..."

"Don't just say that leisurely, think of something... Ahhh!"

Finally, an adventurer couldn't withstand Vanir's fierce attack and fell to its blunt blow, crumbling the line of defense.

Megumin yelped when she saw what happened.

"Fuhahaha! It's time to settle our score, moi rival! To die under the blade of your companion, how blessed art thou!"

"Nah nah, Darkness! I believe in you! You won't lose to the devil right!? It's it's fine right!? Nah, Darkness, can you hear me!?"

Aqua retreated slowly as she shouted, but Darkness did not reply.

The balance between Vanir and the adventurers had broke down. It's only a matter of time before Aqua who was hiding behind them will be attacked.

"Satou-san, are you not going to join the battle? Aren't that priest and possessed crusader your party mates?! Are you not going to save them?"

Sena asked me urgently, now what should I do?

"No, you should know that I am just an adventurer. Guys that are stronger than me are falling one after another. I can't turn the tide even if I join the fray."

"You! What is with you!"

As Sena's face was cramping from disgust, the adventurers lost their ability to fight one after another.

"Ka, Kazuma--! This is a big crisis! The biggest crisis I have ever met--!"

Aqua who was on the verge of tears pleaded for help from the distance. Megumin hugged her staff as she looked up at my head with unease.

Even if you looked at me like this, the weak me couldn't do anything...!

Even Sena who was focusing on the adventurers being forced into a corner was looking up at me with a pale face.

I really wanted to give Sena a good lecture right now.

I was not the one who started the commotion, but I got dragged in as a victim every single time.

... Sigh, I kept getting dragged into troublesome matters, where did my luck go off to?

People who said I had good luck must have lied to me. I complained in my mind.

"Kazuma-san --! Kazuma-san --!"

-- I listened to Aqua's pleas for aid.

"... You guys are really troublesome ahhhh!"

I shouted a little disparagingly as I prayed. I hoped that if my luck really was good, everything would turn out well as I charged in with my sword drawn.

Part 9

Vanir seemed to have completely taken over Darkness's body.

"Fuhahahaha! Fuhahahaha! Alright, prepare yourself, moi rival! To think I can destroy thou in such a place, even I couldn't foresee that! Oh... The weakest man among the adventurers present... Thou true nature had been seen through by moi, allow this devil of foresight to give you my prophecy."

Vanir spoke to me who was standing before Darkness:

“Thou who seeks peace and stability listen well. Don’t waste your effort; just pretend you didn’t see anything. Thou has good luck, but it was cancelled out by the bad luck of your companions. For your own safety, thou should find other party mates, that way...”

Before Vanir could finish, I already slashed at his mask in silence!

But as I expected, that was easily dodged by him.

“The man who values his safety before all else, what caused you to have a change of heart? No matter what thou does, it won’t help the current situation. Aside from the Vanir doll, I can also throw in a mask that looked just like moi. Just take these and be gone.”

“I, I don’t want such things... Anyway, what’s up with you Darkness, why did you let your body get taken over so easily? You got tamed by that devil who suddenly showed up in no time? Are you really a gullible and easy woman?”

I said my taunting words.

“Fuhahahaha! It’s useless, now (Jerk, who are you calling gullible and easy! He didn’t tame me! It’s just that the way this devil is manipulating and hurting my heart is too skilled...!) as thou can see, this girl can’t hear you any..... Hmm... What an iron-like will, moi didn’t expect this. I have lived in this world for such a long time, but I have never met someone I couldn’t dominate.”

Should I say this was as I expected? That crusader whose interest was in endurance still had control over herself.

“Darkness, listen carefully. I will break the seal on the mask in a moment. It’s fine even if it is just an instant, but you have to wrest back control of

your body from Vanir. Then rip off that mask and throw it away. After that..."

Once the mask was removed from Darkness, it would be Aqua's turn to shine.

... It was as though he saw through what I was thinking...

"Hmm, that isn't a bad plan, but there is a problem. How would thou who is weak break the seal of moi who had fully unleashed the powers of this girl? It would be so much easier to defeat my hated enemy by maintaining the current status quo. If you want to break the seal, wait until I have finished off that woman. (Yeah, don't look down on the current me. I don't think I will lose to anybody right now!)

That's what Vanir said and...

"You, you moron... are you on his side too?!"

-- The adventurers who lost consciousness after getting hit by the blunt side of Vanir's sword collapsed around the area.

And Aqua who was casting healing spell on the adventurers who were down, stood behind me when she saw that I was opposing Vanir:

"Kazuma, I will support you from behind! Use my buffing spells and destroy that devil like a hero!"

After Aqua said her irresponsible lines to fan the flames...

"Fufu, I will help you from behind too. Alright Kazuma, it is time for you to awaken the power sleeping inside you. Stop playing around and liberate Darkness from that devil!"

Megumin who was also standing behind me also taunted irresponsibly.

What do you mean by the power sleeping inside me?

But Aqua and Megumin seemed to think that I would challenge Vanir head on and then break the seal.

Vanir took up a fighting stance when he heard what they said.

“Fuhahaha! You want to defeat moi?! (If) you want to take off this (talisman!), come (at me bro). Shut up! Don’t snatch the cool lines from moi!”

“Didn’t the two of you hate that talisman? And now you don’t want me to take it off, make up your mind.”

As I couldn’t help but retort, I instructed Aqua to prepare her exorcism spell.

“Brat, thou must be have a scheme in mind. It’s all because of that woman who is emitting bright flames, shrouding thou’s mind from me. But thou didn’t seem to be planning to fight moi with swords... Hmmm, thou must be thinking of using some skills right? (It’s ‘steal’! Kazuma must be using his best skill ‘steal’!)”

“You, you idiot! Why did you reveal my trump card!”

I couldn’t help retorting when I heard Darkness gloated. Vanir smiled deviously.

“Kazuma, the spell is ready!”

“Great, leave the rest to me! Well then, time for me to move, Darkness! Just like that time in the dojo, let’s make a bet! If I win, I will add in something even more overboard on top of my ‘overboard demand’. You can do as you wish if you win!”

“(Ahh, to, to use such tricks at a time like this...!) Damn, damn it, don’t get taken in by the tempting words of that man! Don’t show your weak side, refresh your soul! Increase your power to resist his ‘steal’...!”

As Darkness was struggling internally, Vanir couldn’t move well and stopped.

At this moment, I heard Megumin started chanting explosion spell behind me.

I was stunned for a moment, and saw that Megumin was staring at the entrance of the dungeon when I turned back.

Adventurers were rushing out of the dungeon, and Vanir’s dolls were chasing them.

When Vanir saw that, the eyes of the mask gleamed eerily, and the dolls flooding out of the dungeon started swarming towards us.

Megumin seemed to be targeting them.

“Alright, I’m coming Vanir! Darkness, keep resisting Vanir, don’t let him move!”

I said as I reached out towards the mask...!

“Just a ‘Steal’ from a mere adventurer! If thou think it will work on moi, thou art going to be disappointed! Just try it, don’t hold back...!”

“Tinder--!”

... After all that build up, what I shouted wasn’t ‘steal’, but the fire magic ‘tinder’.

I didn’t need to tear or steal the talisman.

I just needed to burn it with fire...!

“... Fuha! Fuhahahaha! Fuhahahahaha! (Ahhh, how despicable, Kazuma you scoundrel!) To think thou could trick moi, the devil of foresight, splendid!”

The talisman on the mask caught fire and the thing bounding Vanir and Darkness together was gone.

“Hey Darkness, show me your mental toughness! Take off that mask and throw it away!”

Darkness placed her hand on her mask when she heard me say that and-
-!

“(...! I can’t take it off...!)”

Under the strong resistance from Vanir, the mask was still sticking tightly to Darkness’ face.

Vanir’s dolls were swarming in.

And the adventurers who escaped the dungeon formed a human wall to block them.

Everyone seemed to sense that we were facing a boss level enemy, and were planning to hold back the minions for us.

“Kazuma-san--! What should I do? Can I cast my spell?”

“No, wait, the mask is still on Darkness! Even if you cast your spell like this, it would be resisted by her...”

-- At this moment.

“(Don’t worry, just do it.)”

With her hands still trying to take off the mask, Darkness muttered.

Even if she said that, it won't be effective.

"(If Aqua's spell don't work... Then don't worry about me and cast explosion, just blow me away with him.)"

Darkness said...

... Hey, what are you saying.

"You idiot! No matter how tough you are, you can't survive explosion magic!"

"(How would you know if you don't try it!) Wait, don't be rash, let's talk this over."

When Darkness said that, Vanir who was calm all this while started to panic a little.

Darkness then told Aqua and Megumin behind me who had finished preparing their magic:

"Aqua! Cast the exorcism spell the moment this mask leaves my body!) How about calling it a draw today? (If this mask keep sticking onto me, then cast your explosion, Megumin...!) To fight to a draw with moi who is a demon king army boss and the duke of hell, it is something thou could boast to others about!"

"I, I understand Darkness! I will do it once that annoying thing is out of the way!"

Aqua watched that mask closely, ready to cast her spell any moment.

"Kazuma, Darkness is insane, even she can't survive that!"

Megumin cried to me with tears in her eyes.

Suddenly, everyone, including the dolls charging us, Sena and the adventurers stopped.

They stood far away from Darkness, not daring to move.

-- In this situation.

“(... Hey Vanir. The time was short, but it wasn't too bad hanging around with you. So at the very least... I will let you choose. You want to be purified after getting away from me, or do you want to be blown up by explosion together with me. Which one do you prefer?)”

Darkness forced Vanir to make such an unreasonable choice.

Both of them meant his destruction.

“... I am a devil.”

Vanir answered with a heavy heart...

“As an existence that opposes the gods, I don't want to be purified. Fuhahaha... My wish for destruction is coming true in an unexpected manner. Good bye, it was fun possessing thou's body.”

He chose explosion.

Hearing him say that, the masked Darkness went far away from us.

“(Do it, Megumin!)”

Darkness cruel request made Megumin shook her head in refusal. I went up to Sena who was watching the events unfold with a blank expression and patted her shoulder.

"If something unfortunate do happen, please be the witness and testify that it was my instruction. It is the same this time too, I will bear the full responsibility."

When she heard what I said, Sena nodded firmly with a pale face and gulped.

The crusader that was the pride of our party was really tough and tenacious.

-- The toughest in all of Axel.

"Do it, Megumin!"

Shortly after I gave the word.

A loud explosion took place a short distance before the dungeon--

Epilogue 1 — — Aqua — —

— — It had been some time since our battle with that strange devil.

Kazuma, the rest of the party and I were summoned to the adventurers guild.

Really, Kazuma was so troublesome.

Why did that guy kept getting into trouble?

I don't want to fight with a boss of a demon king army anymore.

Can't I have more peace and quiet?

Of course, I still want to return back to heaven. I didn't run into anything good since coming to this world.

“Wow, you display exceptional talent on things that don’t really matter.”

Kazuma mocked me while I was doodling on the table.

“Of course, who do you think I am?”

The goddess of water playing with water is a small chore.

“I don’t think anyone will doubt you if you claim to be the goddess of parties.”

I really felt like giving that filthy mouth of Kazuma a holy punch.

But the generous me wouldn’t do something like that.

It’s, it’s not because I am afraid of Kazuma fighting back.

Yup, that’s right, not afraid at all, not a tiny bit.

Megumin who kept stirring trouble and Darkness who kept saying perverted things gave Kazuma plenty of stress after all, so I should treat him better.

The kids in this party were all unreliable. As a goddess, I had to watch over them.

“...Hey, you are thinking of something weird right? Why are you looking at me with pitying eyes? It feels so infuriating for you to stare at me like this.”

When I display my matured side, Kazuma sprouted this nonsense.

It must be because he was too childish and lacked calcium.

But he would definitely become mature in the future.

After all, the reason the guild was asking for us--

Epilogue 2 — — Megumin — —

— — I didn’t do much this time.

I wasn’t as bad as Aqua and Darkness, but I did trouble Kazuma sometimes, so I was thinking of supporting him well this time...

I am the only normal person in this party, if I don’t pull myself together...

My familiar Chomosuke was resting on the table. Kazuma probably bribed it with food, that’s why it likes him so much.

“... This fellow gets along well with me, but it hates Aqua. So its true that animals will be close to people with a kind heart.”

“The kind me was thinking about being nicer to Kazuma who had been troubled so much by everyone, but I just heard something incredible.

Are you implying that the holy me does not have a kind personality?”

“Yes, and what are you going to do about it?”

Kazuma and Aqua started fighting, making Chomosuke scramble away to its home base-- which is my shoulder.

At a corner of the guild, Yunyun who was planning to work together with me in order to prove Kazuma’s innocence was eating a set meal all by herself.

Just stop being stubborn and eat with us, don’t keep brooding on our ‘rival’ relationship.

Kazuma cleared his suspicion of being a spy of the demon king army.

But he would still need to give thanks to Yunyun who worked hard behind the scenes.

“Ughhh... No more...”

A low moan came from the seat opposite Kazuma.

Darkness was lying onto the table with her face blushed and was trembling.

Her face turned red every time an adventurer teased her.

The aristocratic lady was too naive. She seemed like a cool beauty, but her emotions fluctuated widely, which made others want to bully her.

... Okay.

I stood up and walked to Darkness’ side--

Epilogue 3 — — Darkness — —

-- Why did it turned out like this?

Just why?

“Stop messing around! Like I said, including the havoc during the trial, you caused the most trouble! If I had to rank the three of you by how

much trouble you gave, it would be you! Megumin! Darkness! If you get it then don't stir any more things before my award ceremony! Just go to that wall and count how many lines are there!"

"Waahhhh! Kazuma you are too mean! I didn't get into trouble intentionally! The flood with Beldia and the barrier at the cemetery-- Everything I did was for the people!"

"Wait a minute, I should be the one who caused the least trouble!"

I hugged my head and rest it face down on the table, ignoring the squabbling three.

At this moment, someone spoke to me from behind.

"Hey Lalatina! What a cute name you have."

This made me tremble.

"Lalatina-chan~ Let's buy some clothes that suit your cute name! I will pick some for you!"

I shook even more.

"By the way, Lalatina... sounds like some famous lady, so eloquent."

Please show mercy...!

After solving the matchmaking issue, another problem surfaced--

I lift my head and stared with teary eyes at the man behind all this.

"Oh, what is it Lalatina? Why make such a scary face; It doesn't suit the cute name you have."

"Urghhhh...!"

Even my ears were turning red. I gritted my teeth and endured Kazuma's mocking.

He did say he will do something that would make me beg for mercy if I lose...!

Ahh, that coward!

I was looking forward to it, and he backed off in the end...!

In the end, that Alexei didn't mention anything further.

He had his eyes on me for so long, I don't think he would let it go so easily.

"Ara, it's about to start. I will back in no time, Lalatina."

Kazuma said as he stood up. I picked up the wooden cup near my hand and threw it at him.

Epilogue 4 — — Kazuma — —

"Adventurer, Mr. Satou Kazuma!"

I basked in the passionate gazes of the adventurers as I stood before the guild counter.

"In honor of your major contribution in ensuring the safety of the city, we offer you our thanks. Further to this, we would like to apologize for the false accusation--"

Sena bowed deeply as she said. I received the letter of thanks from her hand.

-- This happened a week after the battle with Vanir.

If I really was a spy of the demon king army, I wouldn't sacrifice so much in order to destroy a boss of the demon king army. And thus, my suspicion was cleared.

Sena who witnessed my entire fight with Vanir absolved me from the crime of treason. And I finally received my bounty for taking down the mobile fortress.

Thanks to that, I could compensate the landlord for his mansion. Darkness' had made a full recovery, and the group of us were summoned to the guild--

"Next, Dustiness Ford Lalatina! Your selfless spirit is admirable. To honor your stellar performance which lived up to the name of house Dustiness, and to compensate you for your losses, the royal family had sent you a letter of gratitude and a full plate armor made from a highly skilled smith."

After Sena finished, the knight next to her presented a new set of armor to the blushing Darkness who was trembling.

-- Megumin's explosion took out the masked devil Vanir.

After the explosion, Darkness who was lying in the crater suffered life threatening injury. And of course, her armor was ruined. Aqua then healed Darkness and now she was as good as new.

"Congratulations, Lalatina!"

Someone shouted. Darkness shivered suddenly.

"Great job, Lalatina!"

"That's our Lalatina!"

The cheers of 'Lalatina' made Darkness cover her face from embarrassment, and laid her face down onto the table again.

"This...! This feeling of humiliation is not the 'overboard demand' I wanted...!"

Darkness moaned weakly as she laid on the table.

Something that will make Darkness beg for mercy in tears...

I only made good on my promise.

"Nah Darkness, I think Lalatina is a cute name! I will punish Kazuma who spread this name out as a joke-- Have more confidence in your name, Lalatina!"

Aqua meant no harm, but her words stabbed Darkness like a knife.

Megumin who intentionally sat beside her was trying to hold back her laughter as she gently shook Darkness' trembling shoulders.

-- The overboard demand was to spread the name Lalatina.

And so, Darkness was teased by adventurers everyday. But that wouldn't last long.

"-- We will now present the prize money to Mr. Satou!"

Sena continued. The rowdy guild became silent.

"Adventurer Satou Kazuma and party! Not only did you defeat the mobile fortress destroyer, you even took down the demon king army boss Vanir. In merit of your accomplishment--!"

Sena has a gentle expression right now, her stern and cold face during the trial was no where to be found.

“After deducting your debts and the compensation for the landlord’s mansion...”

Sena gave me a piece of paper.

“I present to you 40 million Eris as reward!”

She then passed a heavy bag to me.

The moment I took the bag, loud cheers erupted inside the guild.

The adventurers showered me with well wishes and asked me to treat them.

Before we know it, the entire guild entered celebration mode.

I left the scene to the Goddess of Parties Aqua and Megumin, and left the guild together with Darkness.

-- The debts had been cleared.

That might be so, but Darkness and I weren’t that happy.

... We had somewhere we had to go.

We had to inform someone of the news that Vanir had been defeated.

Vanir said before that he was visiting a friend in this city.

This friend had the special skill of becoming more impoverished the harder she worked...

This impoverished shop owner must have been Wiz who was a demon king boss just like him.

Which meant we killed Wiz’s friend.

He was targeting Aqua, and it was obvious since we were adventurers.

That might be so, but we still feel bad about this.

We came to a corner of a deserted alley.

The sign of Wiz magic item shop was displayed right before us.

“Kazuma, let me tell Wiz about this. The time might be short, but I shared a body and wreaked havoc together with him. I can’t accept the way he likes to toy with humans, but I don’t think he has a bad nature... I don’t know why he hates Aqua that much, anyway... it might not be appropriate for a crusader who serve the goddess Eris to say this but-- I don’t really hate him.”

Darkness said as she looked into the distance.
She said ‘wreak havoc together’.
So she did have fun that time.
But now that it has come to this--

We opened the door and entered the shop.
“Welcome!”

After hearing Wiz’s calm greeting, I painfully imagined what kind of expression she will make after this.

-- I discovered a new employee wearing an apron in the shop.

He was tall.

His mouth was opened wide and he looked kind--!

“Hehe welcome! The girl who gave an embarrassing monologue while looking into the distance in front of the door, I want to tell thou something too. I don’t hate thou, but devils like moi have no gender, so I can’t accept thou embarrassing confession... Ohhh, this negative emotion full of shame is tasty! Hmmm, why art thou curled up in a ball, did you really think thou defeated moi!? Hahahahaha!”

The masked shop employee stood confidently before us.
I patted the shoulder of Darkness who was hugging her legs and burying her face in her knees. Wiz then came out from behind the counter.

“Ara, welcome Kazuma-san! I heard your false accusation was cleared after you defeated Vanir-san! Congratulations, all that is left is your debts right!? But no problem, Vanir-san is very proficient in making money...!”

I raised a hand to cut off Wiz who was chattering happily.

“I did clear my name-- but what is with this guy? How could he be doing so well after taking a blast of explosion magic? Isn't his existence itself a cheat? He is not hurt at all!”

Vanir looked surprised.

“What are you saying, even moi couldn't make it out unscathed after taking such a grand attack. Look closely at this mask.”

He pointed to the forehead of his mask.

Looking at it carefully, a 'II' was written on it.

“Because of the explosion spell, I lost a live. I am Vanir Mk 2 now.”

“Are you picking a fight?”

I was enraged. Wiz rushed over to stop us.



“Vanir-san was already planning on resigning from the post of demon king boss. Coincidentally, he was ‘defeated’, giving him a new lease of life. Vanir-san is no longer maintaining the demon king castle barrier; he is a harmless existence now.”

Wiz smiled happily, she was very pleased to see her old friend.

Is, is he really harmless now...?

Would it be safer to summon Aqua over and destroy it once more?

As I was troubled over that.

“Thou who came from a far away place, the one who is weak and yet want to defeat the demon king. This devil that could see through all things prophecize that in the near future, thou and this whimpering girl will face thou greatest crisis ever. The crisis will be so grave that thou will regret thou own helplessness. Thou will prosper in the field of business... Art thou interested in listening to moi proposal?”

Vanir declared dramatically as the corner of his lips opened in a smile--

「祝! (ハハ*)」
3かん発着

ダクネスさんは
巻を重ねるごとに
いじめるようになる度が
アップしている...

というわけで"
キレイな
ダクネスさん。
お嬢様
描いて
楽しいです。

ふしぎ
2014.03

NEXT



AH, WHAT WONDERFUL FRAGRANCE. THIS IS TOP QUALITY TEA, KAZUMA-SAN



THANK YOU.



.....



THE ONLY MADE A BIT OF MONEY, WHY ARE THEY ACTING LIKE THIS?

YOU ARE RIGHT! NAH, KAZUMA, IT'S TIME TO TAKE SOME QUEST...



GO HIRE SOME ADVENTURERS IF YOU WANT TO RAISE YOUR LEVEL. THE WOUNDS JACK FROST INFLECTED ON ME IS STILL ACHING

WHAT...



HEY, IF YOU WANT TO HEAL YOUR WOUNDS, HOW ABOUT VISITING THE ONSEN IN "ALCADIA"?



EHH!? "ALCADIA"!?. PUHEHE, OKAY! IT IS ABOUT TIME FOR YOU ALL TO UNDERSTAND WHAT A GREAT PERSON I AM!



?? ALRIGHT, I WILL GO SINCE THERE'S ONSEN.

3の
素晴らしい
世界に祝福を! 4
THE USELESS QUARTET



COMING SOON!!